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General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

34th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 December 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 7 *(continued)* **and 132**

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Pattern of conferences

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/65/337/Add.1)

The President *(spoke in French)*: Members are aware that, pursuant to paragraph 7 of section I of resolution 40/243, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

Authorization is thus sought for the United Nations Appeals Tribunal to hold one meeting in New York during the main part of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that the meeting will have to be accommodated when facilities and services can be made available without adversely affecting the activities of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. It is also the understanding that everything possible will be done to ensure the most efficient use of conference services.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize the United Nations Appeals Tribunal to meet during the main part of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 9 and 13

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/216)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/84)

The President *(spoke in French)*: In connection with agenda item 9, I recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2010, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects would be addressed by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 with respect to considering item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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In connection with agenda item 13, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summit's, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Hamidon Ali, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/65/3.

The Council's work for this year should be seen in the context of the overall effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which culminated in the MDG summit in September, shortly after the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

Last month, some 89 heads of State and Government adopted a collective road map for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

With the multiple crises — food, energy, climate, financial and economic — exposing the weaknesses in our international financial and economic system, and with economic recovery still faltering, the summit sent a clear message that Member States remain fully committed to the Goals set 10 years ago. The outcome of the summit (resolution 65/1) also identified the continuing role of the Economic and Social Council in its follow-up.

I would like to take this opportunity to first reflect on the outcome of the Council's work in that context and then turn to areas for future action.

The 2010 annual ministerial review focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The review confirmed that both issues sit squarely at the heart of development and peace worldwide. Further, the review coincided with the establishment of the UN Women entity. In that regard, the 13 countries that gave national voluntary presentations provided rich information on success factors and experiences at the country level. National voluntary presentations have grown into a vital platform for lessons learned, characterized by sincere and transparent presentations that share successful policies and identify challenges for the benefit of others.

The ministerial declaration adopted at the close of the high-level segment serves as a pivotal action point on progress, challenges and implementation gaps. It identifies strategies to effectively implement international commitments on gender equality and opens new windows for collaborative actions, partnerships and the engagement of new and diverse stakeholders. The declaration served as a useful source for agreement on the MDG outcome document on issues of gender equality and empowerment.

The impact and visibility of the substantive segment were further enhanced by an extensive series of side events on a range of cross-cutting themes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Those were organized by Member States, entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental stakeholders. Together, those activities served as the Council's hub for promoting and catalysing tangible multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the United Nations development agenda.

The prevailing complex economic and financial climate gave special relevance to the Economic and Social Council's second Development Cooperation Forum. The Forum's interactive policy dialogues produced action-oriented policy messages on changes in the development cooperation architecture, aid allocation and effectiveness, and policy coherence. The Forum also sent a clear political message to the General Assembly's High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs on the importance of sustaining and improving development cooperation against the backdrop of the crises.

As a global independent platform, the Development Cooperation Forum was encouraged to engage more countries and stakeholders in discussions on aid effectiveness and mutual accountability, and to promote more balanced aid relationships with more robust Government systems to manage aid funds. The meetings underscored that the policies of developed countries need to be coherent with development objectives. At the same time, the catalytic role of aid in increasing other sources of development finance was emphasized. The deliberations called for greater political momentum and a focus on turning pledges into implementation. It was also felt that the aid effectiveness agenda should be broadened to include

concerns such as conditionality or flexibility to combat exogenous shocks.

On South-South cooperation, a variety of positive experiences were shared. Overall, there was unprecedented participation from relevant development cooperation actors, including national Governments, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and local Government. I remain convinced that the Development Cooperation Forum should be annualized to fulfil expectations of it as a forum for keeping development cooperation under review.

This year, the coordination segment proved to be a rich source of ideas and elements for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on the health-related MDGs and MDG 8, on a global partnership. There was strong support for accelerating progress to achieve the targets for women and children, and the Council gave impetus to the Secretary-General's action plan on women and children, which was launched during the MDG summit.

The 2010 operational activities segment was a rallying call for the United Nations system to gear up towards the next comprehensive policy review in 2012. The Council made a successful attempt to strengthen the participation of national policymakers in that segment. The debates, with a strong focus on country-level realities, provided a compass for preparation of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities in 2012. There were also broad calls on the United Nations system to maintain a spirit of reform following the system-wide coherence process by continuing the pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency at the country level.

Turning to the humanitarian affairs segment, Member States' decision to focus on the complex issues of operating in high-risk environments, vulnerability and humanitarian response amplified the importance of those issues to our work. Overall, it was heartening to witness significant participation by Governments, the global civil society network, and senior officials of the United Nations system. Moreover, the number of non-governmental organizations that made oral presentations through the new online system of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has doubled and the submission of written statements has tripled.

I am also pleased to report that significant progress has been made in strengthening the Council's work in the area of peace and development. In that regard, the special policy dialogue on the role of women in countries in special situations and the joint special event of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on peacebuilding and the MDGs, held during the substantive session, attracted widespread support and interest.

Haiti remains a focus of the Council's work. The Economic and Social Council remains committed to ensuring that Haiti recovers from the humanitarian disaster and resumes its path to long-term development. As an expression of that commitment, Council members extended the mandate of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti for two years and asked the Group to report on its activities twice a year. I believe that a more focused programme of activities by the Group, in close collaboration with the United Nations system and in support of a Haitian-led recovery process, will go a long way in helping the recovery. The determination of the international community to deliver on its commitments will be paramount.

The Council looks forward to the General Assembly's review of the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council during the current session to see how its role could be further enhanced, most importantly, in regard to the annual ministerial review, assessing the progress made in implementation of the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Development Cooperation Forum, and reviewing trends and progress in international development cooperation. Members will also have an opportunity to consider how to strengthen the Council's link with the Peacebuilding Commission and ad hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies as and when they are requested.

Looking ahead, we have already set in motion preparations for the next annual ministerial review, which will focus on education. As we all know, education is fundamental to the economic and social development of societies and interlinks strongly with the sustainability of our planet in the long run. The ministerial reviews of past years have demonstrated that no true progress is achievable in any field, including gender equality, global public health, sustainable development and poverty eradication, without the clear inclusion of education on an action agenda.

I consider next year's review to be a crucial element in building our shared knowledge of development imperatives. And we must ensure that the recommendations of the previous year's annual ministerial reviews will be carried through. I urge everyone to engage fully in the national, regional and global preparatory activities to set the stage for a successful and path-breaking session next year. Building on our progress and defining new actions informs the spirit with which the Council embraces its work.

Mr. Ali (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to greet this gathering and express the hope that the discussions here will lead to tangible progress on the various issues and challenges that must take priority on the General Assembly's agenda this year, especially agenda item 9 on the report of the Economic and Social Council.

We are extremely pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this session. We fully trust your wisdom, experience and ability to guide us to the light at the end of the tunnel in order to achieve the aspirations of the international community to peace, progress and sustainable development.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report under agenda item 13 (A/65/84) and to welcome the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3). We would also like to commend the extreme efficiency with which Mr. Hamidon Ali has led the Council's work and the members of his Bureau for their extensive efforts.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of brotherly Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This year's session of the Economic and Social Council has developed great momentum thanks to the international and regional climate and the need to create a peaceful and prosperous world based on the common values and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, first and foremost respect for the sovereignty of States and their choices, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and joint cooperation in all economic and social aspects in order to build an effective and capable community of nations that enjoys full and multilateral cooperation integrating the richness and diversity of the international community.

We live in a world where many challenges where the threats confronting us are interrelated. There is no doubt that the international community is convinced now more than ever that, given their rapidity, variety and effects, we cannot face these challenges alone. We need collective action embodied in an international organization that is effective and efficient, like the United Nations, and that launches creative initiatives commensurate with these challenges.

Given its universal membership, legitimacy and global mandate, the United Nations can play a critical role in achieving international cooperation to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We affirm the need for the United Nations system to bolster the abilities of developing countries to implement their development goals. My delegation stresses the importance and vitality of the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs held in September. The Meeting was an opportunity to renew our commitments and to muster resources and collective action to meet the MDGs by 2015.

It was made evident at the Meeting that there is an urgent need to expand the scope of the global partnership for development, to bridge existing gaps, and to meet the challenges confronting developing countries. We believe that the outcome document of the High-level Meeting (resolution 65/1) is a road map helping developing countries to increase their development efforts by ensuring more official development assistance; lifting unjust trade barriers, including those preventing products from developing countries from reaching international markets; and facilitating access to fair prices for their exports and commodities. Protectionist policies must be eliminated and foreign debts alleviated, given the negative impact of such debts on socio-economic development.

The annual special meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the manner laid out in the Monterrey Consensus. In turn, it serves to enrich a constructive debate on seeking the best means and methods to deal with the global economic and financial crisis.

My delegation is in favour of greater efforts and support being extended to ensure fair representation for developing countries, to strengthen transparency and credibility, and to undertake comprehensive reform of the Bretton Woods institutions on the basis of qualifications and merit and in a manner that would guarantee additional resources for developing countries, including multilateral, bilateral and private resources. This would allow for the implementation of measures and the undertaking of the action necessary to overcome the impact of the global economic and financial crisis.

The high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council focused on the need to implement the internationally agreed development goals and to honour commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was a good opportunity to evaluate progress made, exchange experiences and lessons learned, and discuss ways to overcome current and future challenges and obstacles to achieving equality between the sexes.

My delegation welcomes the formation of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and expects it to bolster the Organization's ability to support gender equality and the empowerment of women in a manner consistent with national ownership and leadership of social development programmes in developing countries.

The coordination segment also gave us a chance to focus on the coordination of the implementation of the MDGs. Discussions were held on last year's ministerial declaration regarding the implementation of internationally agreed development goals pertaining to public health. These discussions were a value-added element to the discussions of the MDG summit held last month.

As for the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's session, the obstacles, challenges and lessons learned pertaining to the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian aid were discussed. Humanitarian challenges arising from emergencies and natural disasters are increasing throughout the world, especially in developing countries. Moreover, these challenges have exacerbated the negative effects of the global financial and economic crisis, the food and energy crises, and climate change. There was a discussion of the various international organizations dealing with funding for development, especially the Monterrey Conference and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development held in Doha.

In the same context, this year marks the end of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, which has sought to alleviate poverty, combat hunger and limit maternal mortality rates in order to increase the productive capacities of least developed countries (LDCs), especially in the agricultural sector, to increase investment in infrastructure and to enhance technological capacities. We express our deep concern over the slow progress made by the LDCs, especially in Africa.

As for United Nations operational activities, we confirm the need to enhance the international development partnership based on national ownership of development strategies in developing countries, which should be the guiding principle of all United Nations operational activities.

Peace and stability in the Sudan have been and continue to be the essential and established goals of the Government of National Unity, which affirmed its genuine commitment to peace in the historic signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That Agreement put an end to one of the longest-running civil wars on the African continent, a legacy of the colonial period. Our quest for peace arises from our understanding that it will create a new atmosphere conducive to accelerated development and to the exploitation of the Sudan's great wealth and resources.

From this rostrum, we therefore call on the entire international community to support efforts to bring peace and stability to the Sudan, in view of the fact that such support will strengthen peace and stability in Africa as a whole. We should avoid anything that might harm or have a negative effect on such efforts. In that context, we call on the international community to support the work being done to hold the upcoming referendum and to ensure that it is a fair, transparent and free event at which the people of Southern Sudan can express their genuine desires, with no negative repercussions or pressure that could lead to false or unrealistic results.

While my country has resolutely striven to meet all the MDGs, it has achieved tangible progress in implementing projects that target vulnerable sectors of society, attempt to alleviate poverty, offer services in

public health and education, including childhood and maternity services, and combat diseases.

In the area of poverty reduction, the Sudan has prepared a 25-year economic development plan, beginning with the first five-year plan for the period 2007-2011, which seeks to implement socio-economic development and alleviate poverty. We have also formed a high-level council, chaired by the President of the Republic, to prepare and oversee the national anti-poverty strategy. As a result of these efforts, our spending on the poor increased to 9 per cent of our gross domestic product for 2009. We have also directed that 12 per cent of commercial bank credit lines be allocated to funding small projects. Besides this, the Zakat mechanism, a social equality project, has contributed more than $200 million a year to combating poverty.

The Sudan has also seen positive developments in primary education. Universal free primary education is now official State policy. We have also formulated a national strategy for the education of girls.

We have adopted a national strategy for the advancement and empowerment of women. In 2005, we formulated a national policy to combat violence against women. We have established a department within the Ministry of Justice to combat violence against women and children, along with a unit established in 2006 within the Ministry of the Interior for the protection of children and families. Our 2008 national strategy for combating female genital mutilation has also been given high priority. The penal code has been amended to incorporate an article aimed at protecting women during conflicts. We have allocated 25 per cent of seats in the National Assembly and municipal legislative councils to women, and the number of female parliamentarians has thus grown to 300.

Moreover, the country has adopted policies and measures in support of child health, aimed at ensuring free medical care for children under the age of five. These efforts were crowned by the promulgation in 2010 of the Child Law. The Sudan attaches great importance to the improvement of reproductive health and to that end has formulated a national strategy and road map for reducing maternal mortality.

In the humanitarian sphere, the Government of the Sudan is committed to implementing the international humanitarian communiqué signed with the United Nations on 28 March 2007. The communiqué guidelines have been successfully implemented thanks to the important role played by the supreme mechanism designated to follow up its implementation, which required the Government to make special efforts to open a corridor to Darfur that enabled humanitarian aid to be delivered there. However, we emphasize the need to intensify efforts to overcome the challenges in this area, particularly those involving the shift away from humanitarian aid to development and reconstruction, especially in Darfur. Focusing on reconstruction and development is one of the most important strategic solutions to the Darfur issue.

The economic, trade and financial changes and world development are interrelated. The imbalances in the economic structures of developing and least-developed countries are still hindering development and progress towards achieving the MDGs. The current world economic order, with the unfair conditions it imposes on developing countries' exports, as well as the heavy weight of foreign debt, which is paralysing regional economic activity, hinder the progress of development. That is especially true in Africa, which, as the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) states, enjoys special status and requires more international development aid, stronger development partnerships and relevant initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In this context, I must emphasize the dangerous impact of such natural phenomena as climate change and environmental degradation, which have been primary causes of war and conflict in Africa. The Darfur conflict is a real-life testament to the implications of these phenomena, with direct effects on citizens and their daily livelihood. As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since 1993, the Sudan affirms the need to step up multilateral global action in order to confront climate change, mitigate it more effectively, and ensure the necessary participation of developing countries in addressing its causes and consequences. Developed countries must fulfil their obligations in this area in terms of capacity-building and financial and technical aid to developing countries in order to help them confront this problem.

In closing, I reiterate that the ongoing role of the United Nations imposes on us a collective responsibility, based on the firm will and determination

to make the Organization a global and multilateral forum for engaging fairly and effectively in solving the problems of the world, in a manner that reflects the provisions of the Charter, and in cooperation with regional organizations, in order to achieve international and regional peace and security. The Sudan, an active and committed Member of the United Nations, continues to be committed to these objectives, the fruit of our collective efforts.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/65/84, and I welcome the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2010 in document A/65/3.

Indeed, 2010 has been another critically eventful year. The Group would like at the outset to recognize the dynamic leadership of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, and his Bureau in guiding the work of the Council in 2010. His leadership brought an innovative and invigorating spirit to the work of the Council this year. Our gratitude also goes to all the facilitators of draft resolutions for their tireless efforts.

The High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), held from 20 to 22 September, offered us an opportunity to renew our commitments, rally support and spur collective action to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The summit clearly showed that there is an urgent need to scale up the global partnership for development in order to mobilize additional resources to address the remaining gaps and continuing challenges facing developing countries.

We consider the summit's outcome document (resolution 65/1) to be a plan of action that demands immediate implementation. Likewise, we stress the need for an annual review of this plan of action within the United Nations system in order to make the achievement of the MDGs a reality by 2015.

The annual special meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has provided us with an opportunity to review and strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, as set out in the Monterrey Consensus, by pursuing a constructive and helpful debate among them in order to find ways and means to remedy the world financial and economic crisis.

During that meeting, the Group reiterated its call for the governing structure of the Bretton Woods institutions to be reformed, ensuring the promotion of fair and equitable representation by developing countries, improving transparency and credibility in the appointment of the senior leadership of the Bretton Woods institutions through a transparent and merit-based selection process. We also emphasized the urgent need for adequate resources to be mobilized at the national level and for new and additional resources to be allocated to developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, for the implementation of actions and measures to help them overcome the impact of the current crisis.

The Group stresses once again that the United Nations is the only global body with universal membership and unquestioned legitimacy, and is therefore well positioned to address global economic governance with the objective of achieving sustainable and socially balanced economic development. It is critical that Member States commit to the United Nations process and to multilateralism and its underlying values in order that it may fulfil its role in global economic governance.

Another important event was the high-level segment on the Development Cooperation Forum, a principal venue for global dialogue and policy review on international development cooperation. The Forum could be an appropriate high-level forum that allows for the broader participation of key actors and promotes an effective dialogue among them. Our focus this year was at three levels: mutual accountability and aid transparency, South-South and triangular cooperation, and aid policy coherence with a view to moving from aid to more long-term sources of development financing.

The Group of 77 and China is of the view that the Development Cooperation Forum should not be diverted to specific agendas pursued outside the United Nations framework. The best ways and means of enhancing international development cooperation, as well as the principles that should be applied in that regard, should be discussed and decided by all Member States in an inclusive and transparent manner, drawing from a very wide range of experiences and practices.

The 2010 substantive session of the Council marked the first full cycle of implementation of the new intergovernmental follow-up mechanism of the financing for development process adopted last year. We were therefore pleased by the adoption by consensus of the resolution entitled "Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference".

The high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council also focused on the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. This segment provided us with a timely opportunity to assess the progress made, share experience and lessons learned, and find appropriate ways to overcome remaining obstacles and challenges to the gender issue. In this regard, the Group welcomes the establishment of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and pledges its full support to its operationalization. We hope that the new Entity will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women all over the world.

This year's coordination segment of the Council allowed us to focus on the implementation of existing mandates on coordination. We discussed at length the role of the United Nations in implementing the ministerial declaration of last year's high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which dealt with implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments on global public health. Our discussion provided a useful contribution to the MDG review summit that was held last month.

The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council offered a valuable opportunity to discuss the challenges, obstacles and lessons learned with respect to the strengthening of the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. The humanitarian challenges resulting from complex emergencies and natural disasters continue to increase, especially in developing countries. Moreover, these challenges have been compounded by the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, energy crises and the challenges posed by climate change. The Group reaffirms the urgent need to redouble our efforts to address these challenges.

Given the fact that this year marks the end of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010, the Group expresses its concern at the uneven and insufficient progress in achieving the targets and implementation of the Programme of Action, especially with respect, inter alia, to alleviating poverty, combating hunger, achieving gender equality and reducing maternal mortality. We therefore reiterate our call for the enhanced productive capacity of LDCs, particularly in the agricultural sector, and for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development.

The Council's operational activities segment constitutes a critical element fundamental to strengthening the development pillar of the United Nations. The Group reiterates the need for a strengthened global partnership for development, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies, which should be a guiding principle of United Nations operational activities at the country level.

Among other agreements reached this year by the Council was resolution 2010/25, entitled "Recovering from the world financial and economic crisis: a Global Jobs Pact". The resolution reaffirms that employment creation is essential to recovery efforts and recognizes that the Global Jobs Pact is an important instrument for promoting job-intensive growth. We are pleased by the progress registered in that regard by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Fund, and we encourage other entities of the United Nations system to work towards meeting the objectives of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, whose theme is "Full Employment and Decent Work for All".

In conclusion, let me stress once again that the Group of 77 and China welcomes the new format of the Council's high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, UNCTAD and WTO, since it represents a clear improvement over our past experiences with the financing for development process. We particularly welcome the participation of the President of the Economic and Social Council in the spring meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions, and we hope that that practice can be regularized and expanded in the future.

Mr. De Bassompierre (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union (EU) thanks the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3).

We meet today as we are about to engage in the review of resolution 61/16, on the strengthening of the Council. In that regard, this intervention will focus on three points. First, the EU is encouraged by the progress in the revitalization of the Council. Many of the instruments put in place in recent years have amply proven their worth. Second, while we primarily need to build upon that progress, there is room for improvement in some areas. Third, the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on our own willingness to make it work. The EU is encouraged by recent experience, although we can do better here, too.

Looking back at this year's substantive session, as well as the other three that have taken place since the adoption of resolution 61/16, the EU believes that we have good reason to be encouraged by the progress made in revitalizing the Council.

Over the years, the annual ministerial review has developed into a key high-level forum to discuss broad thematic issues related to development, including a review of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, with a wide range of stakeholders participating. It has thereby become the very embodiment of the Council's role as the principal coordinating organ of the United Nations in economic, social and related fields and as the place to integrate the follow-up of the major United Nations processes in that area.

The ministerial declarations adopted on those occasions have become important reference documents. This year's debate, coinciding with the decision to establish the new entity UN Women and ahead of the recent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summit, confirmed that by providing an important contribution on the crucial issue of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The national voluntary presentations, in particular, provide a valuable opportunity for exchanges of best practices and lessons learned. Both the number of countries volunteering to make presentations and the size and quality of the audience at those presentations demonstrate the high interest that they generate.

The second Development Cooperation Forum confirmed the Forum as an important meeting place for global dialogue on international development cooperation. It also provided a very useful and qualitative contribution to the debate ahead of the MDG summit last month.

The operational activities segment and the humanitarian affairs segment continue to make the Council the central forum for discussion of issues related to development and humanitarian operations at a policy level and with a cross-cutting perspective, both through the resolutions adopted and through the interactive dialogues that precede them. The recent Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence (resolution 64/289) once again confirms the Council in that role and is another good example of the fluid distribution of tasks that has developed between the Council and the General Assembly in that area.

Of course, complacency is never advisable. The EU will fully engage in the upcoming review of the organization of the work of the Economic and Social Council, with a mind open to partners' suggestions, but it will do so with the conviction that, while there is always room for improvement, we primarily need at this stage to build upon the progress already achieved.

Let me mention here some particular elements that may deserve attention in our deliberations.

The coordination segment plays a useful role in the follow-up to the ministerial declarations. This year, it was the framework for the first implementation of the decisions taken in 2009 on strengthening the follow-up to the Financing for Development process, fully utilizing the comparative advantages that the Economic and Social Council offers in terms of multi-stakeholder engagement. We could, however, carry the reflection on the identity and function of that segment further, particularly in relation to the general segment.

The general segment remains woefully overburdened, leading to superficial debates and hasty

consideration of issues that require more attention, as well as to the deferral to resumed sessions of issues that tend to clash with the agenda of other bodies. We should explore how to better prepare the ground for that part of the session and whether some of that work, especially decisions of a more administrative nature, can be carried out outside the substantive session. We should also examine carefully how to avoid duplication between the work of the General Assembly, particularly the Second and Third Committees, and the Economic and Social Council.

The relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission, and more generally consideration by the Council of the link between peace and development, certainly deserve more attention. Initial steps have already been taken through the organization of joint meetings. We should build upon those steps to make the relationship more substantial, as appropriate.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To conclude, the EU would like to refer to the important message of the Economic and Social Council's President, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, in his address at the beginning of this year's session of the Council. While improvements can be made to the Council's hardware — that is, to resolution 61/16 — the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on the software, that is, our own attitude to the body and our willingness to make it work.

In that regard, the EU would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, as well as his predecessor, Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, for their role in steering the revitalization of the Council. The EU is also encouraged by the positive atmosphere that prevailed at the spring meeting and the spirit of renewed cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as by the constructive spirit that prevailed during the negotiations in the Council this summer, leading to good results and consensus agreements.

Nevertheless, here, too, there is room to do even better, in line with the "musts" outlined by President Ali — a proactive agenda, more focused outcomes, better atmospherics, and avoiding stale arguments. Better discipline in the timely tabling of resolutions, in particular, would contribute to alleviating some of the burden of the general segment. Better respect by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations for the guiding principles for granting consultative status in the Economic and Social Council is also urgently needed.

The European Union stands ready to engage constructively in further discussion about the organization of the Council in the coming weeks.

Ms. Kaur (India): Allow me to begin by reaffirming India's conviction in the leadership of Mr. Joseph Deiss as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also take this opportunity to warmly thank Member States for electing India a member of the Security Council for the 2011 and 2012 term.

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

India welcomes the theme the President chose for the current Assembly session, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance". A stronger United Nations, reflective of contemporary realities, is indeed the need of the hour. It would ensure that the imperatives of maintaining international peace and security are addressed and that there is an integrated and coordinated follow-up of the United Nations development agenda.

The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s have generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. We emphatically reiterated that common understanding at the high-level events on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Mauritius Strategy and biodiversity held in September 2010 in New York. The MDG declaration clearly articulated that the allocation of resources, the development of appropriate national and international policies and integrated follow-up and implementation are absolute imperatives for the realization of our cherished Millennium Goals by 2015.

Interlinkages and overlaps among the various United Nations development summits and conferences are strong. The Mauritius Strategy would derive immense benefits and strength from a comprehensive, ambitious and equitable outcome of the climate change negotiations. Similarly, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity under way in

Nagoya, Japan, must fully address the various social and economic development challenges along with its core environmental concerns so as to maximize, through such global action, protection against loss of biodiversity.

The multiple United Nations conferences and summits focused on attainment of internationally agreed development goals must have a seamless, holistic and integrated working relationship with each other. We must work to develop work models that ensure synergetic resource flows, coordinated assessment and planning, and a holistic approach to our global development programmes. In that context, India sees the creation of UN Women as an important step towards an integrated approach to development within the United Nations.

The strengthened interaction and institutional linkages between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are equally encouraging. Our successful follow-up efforts on pivotal conferences having significant bearing on global development goals — such as the Monterrey Consensus and the June 2009 Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development — deserve special mention. We must sustain those efforts. However, it is important to remember that no one size fits all, and it is imperative that national priorities of countries always have primacy in the pursuance of the development agenda by United Nations bodies.

India fully realizes the importance of a strong global partnership supported by international and national development strategies on trade, debt, investment, technology transfer, food security, energy access, climate change and a host of other issues to create an environment conducive to development. India will push for an ambitious, comprehensive and equitable outcome at the climate change negotiations, one that is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. We also look forward to a development-oriented outcome of the Doha Round.

To ensure that international policies are pro-development, concerns of developing countries must be effectively taken on board in their formulation and implementation. Unfortunately, current institutional structures do not permit that, even though developing countries are the ones most affected. The economic crisis highlighted the grave imbalance in the structures of global governance, including on the economic side. India, along with fellow developing countries, has been in the forefront of demands for a greater voice in the Bretton Woods institutions.

To make the process as inclusive as possible, the United Nations, with its unique position, has a key role. Still, as I mentioned earlier, it needs urgent reform, and nowhere in the United Nations is reform more needed than in the Security Council. Council membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, as is the desire of an overwhelming majority of Member States. I am glad that the General Assembly decided in its sixty-fourth session that the text-based negotiations must be immediately taken up in the sixty-fifth session. It is important that those negotiations are moved forward on an urgent basis.

Also, the United Nations system cannot be strengthened without revitalizing the General Assembly. Here too, I am glad that in adopting resolution 64/301 on this subject, there was some progress for the first time in several years.

The Economic and Social Council has a crucial role in fostering a comprehensive United Nations development agenda through integrated and coordinated implementation of its commitments. The Council has an acknowledged role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. It is satisfying that the Council's annual ministerial review and its Development Cooperation Forum have become important events to review efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The July 2010 session of the Economic and Social Council focused on promoting greater coherence between policy and development goals and making development partnership more participatory and transparent. Over the years, the Council has played an important role in advancing a holistic and coordinated approach to global economic and social development, taking into account the interrelatedness of the different goals and targets of major United Nations conferences.

We must work to make the Economic and Social Council even more meaningful than what was originally envisaged in the United Nations Charter and subsequently strengthened by the various United

Nations resolutions, particularly Assembly resolution 61/16.

My delegation looks forward to the President's proposals on strengthening the centrality of the United Nations system in global governance and its development role. He can count on our express support in that regard.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I am happy to take this opportunity to discuss the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3), as my country's first tenure on the Council is coming to an end, later this year.

During our membership we have experienced the Council as a forum of substantive discussion where important governance mandates come together. We have seen, particularly this year, how important the strategic input of the Council can be to major United Nations agenda items, such as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review the Council set the tone for a successful negotiation process, leading to the consensus outcome of the MDG summit. In that regard, the Council has contributed to strengthening the central role of the United Nations in the governance of international development policies.

The Council also has an important role in the governance of its functional committees and in the election and supervision of the executive bodies of specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Currently, the Council is acting swiftly to guarantee a smooth transition for the new gender entity, UN Women. In particular, where its subsidiary bodies do not live up to the standards of transparency, inclusiveness, objectivity and good faith in applying rules of procedure, the Council itself must take leadership. It has done so in the past, for example in the context of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Such action by the Council shows that it can and will assume its responsibility to rectify decisions of subsidiary bodies, if need be.

Moreover, there are areas where the Council should consider structural reform. In that regard, we hope that the report of the Secretary-General that will examine the strengthening of institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters will reflect the view of many Member States — including ours — that the work of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters must become more transparent, accessible and inclusive.

Another field of particular importance to us, and one where the Council is mandated to assume a policy governance function, is the humanitarian dimension of the work of United Nations funds, agencies and programmes. The Council has the specific mandate to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance in the United Nations system.

We are aware of the high political sensitivity of these matters, but we also believe that the Council could contribute more to United Nations policy coherence on the ground, without entering notorious fields of political disagreement. The inclusion of concrete policy guidelines of a cross-cutting nature — such as a health- and environment-friendly approach to nutrition-processing in emergency situations — would strengthen the Council's humanitarian policy guidance and contribute directly to its governance capacity in this field.

We acknowledge that during our tenure the Council has considerably streamlined its agenda and focus. There is much less overlap now in the work of the Council and of other forums, most importantly the Second Committee. The Council now has a clearer understanding of its mandate as the central United Nations body for strategic financial and economic policy coordination.

We must, however, strive for more complementarity in order to strengthen the legitimacy and authority of the Economic and Social Council. Only on that basis can the Council contribute in a meaningful way to the work of all major United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, in accordance with the three-pillar approach reflected in the outcome document of the 2005 summit (resolution 60/1). With the experience of our membership in the Council, we will continue to contribute to those efforts as we continue to see a potential in the Council that exceeds its current impact by far.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the leadership he has shown in carrying out his function.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its gratitude for the presentation of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3) to the Assembly. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the President and members of the Council and reiterate our commitment to supporting and cooperating with them.

Honduras endorses the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Ten years have gone by since, in this same world forum, the historic convergence of the end of a century and the dawn of a new millennium motivated a very promising summit of world leaders and led to a unique set of visionary commitments. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promised, on the basis of an unprecedented global alliance, to address the most urgent needs of the poorest people of the planet. Only five years are left until the deadline for reaching the Goals set in that ambitious Declaration, signed by heads of State and Government. Though there are achievements to be celebrated, we are not holding our breath that the task can be accomplished in the time remaining.

The bleak spectre of extreme poverty still haunts and keeps its hold over hundreds of thousands of households in various parts of the world. We listened with the greatest heartfelt interest as, during this latest session of the Assembly — thanks to the initiative of the Secretary-General in convening another special summit to review the road we have travelled in pursuit of complying with the noble Millennium Goals — many of the most developed nations renewed their commitment to make a priority of this unending struggle without borders.

We appreciate this opportunity to add light where light has previously been lit by others. We do that with the greatest hopes, those of us who come from elsewhere — not from what has wrongly been called the poor countries of the world, because I will never accept that my country, so rich in intangible values, or that our people, with serious economic hardship but with the power of their faith, the legacy of their inner resources and the greatness of their dreams, are poor. We lack the necessary development, perhaps, and maybe we missed the good fortune to avoid marginalization, exclusion and inequities, but we are not poor.

We will attempt to summarize some of the setbacks that have impeded the full realization of laudable statements. The reluctance of some rich nations to fully meet their obligations is added to the devastating impact of the financial crisis — springing from wild actions, speculative transactions and immoral, greedy practices — on vulnerable markets, a crisis that the victims did not cause.

If the disparities of international trade force the corn-and-tortilla nations to sell the sweat of their strenuous labour cheaply in order to pay dearly for goods and supplies imported from industrialized countries, it is insult added to injury that to that already unfair exchange are added subsidies, quotas, tariffs and barriers to our export products, each more ingenious than the last.

How can the weak be expected to compete fairly with the strong when, in addition to the disparity in productive capacity, the strong try keep them down in order to inundate them with their products at exorbitant prices and to acquire the fruit of the subjugated labour of the weak at dirt-cheap rates that do not correspond to the magnitude of their work? Nor is the entire production of the more than 500,000 families in my country who make a living by growing coffee enough to pay half of our oil bill to the cartels that sell that resource, which we lack, at ridiculous prices.

To this we must add the cyclical damage of the erratic environment that ends life, destroys infrastructure and kills our crops. The effects of climate change do not come from developing countries, but just the same, they must pay with a high share of sacrifice their undeserved share of its consequences. The terrible attacks of violent nature have devastated many communities across the globe, which struggle tirelessly to emerge from their precarious state of prostration only to succumb again to such devastating catastrophes.

Only a few years ago, we suffered the impact of a hurricane of biblical proportions. In an instant, we saw, before our tear-filled eyes, the accumulated efforts of more than 50 years of hard work and modest progress vanish. We felt as if the fierce winds and the turbulent flooding of the rivers were sweeping away any hope of moving forward. A great many communities that had finally been glimpsing a promising horizon were suddenly pushed back to the abyss of extreme poverty. However, thanks to the miracle of faith and the virtue

of our internal unity, and bathed in the soothing balm of international solidarity for which we are eternally grateful, we climbed from that deep pit with a renewed spirit to overcome adversity.

Since then, we have stumbled many times, as the path we have travelled and the path that lies ahead is stony. And we have suffered many setbacks. However, we are not overcome by the difficulty, nor are we short of breath or, much less, determination.

There are valuable achievements that we cherish and must care for — the good fortune of coexisting in a civilized manner, under the protection of a system that respects freedoms, rights and gains. In a non-liquid economy, where almost all income goes to expenses that barely cover basic needs and requirements, we value the possibility of having some resources for social investment — the commitment to invest in our people or in programmes designed as part of the poverty reduction strategy and in the school meal programme that reduces the school dropout rate and enhances the physical and moral state of our little promises of the future, to cite two examples among many. Those are minimal resources to ensure that the national plan recently adopted by the current Administration does not become a useless document taking up space in a forgotten desk drawer.

We must confess that we feel overwhelmed, sometimes even discouraged, by those critical limitations and tremendous negations that undermine the possibility of living a life with dignity. There is no peace when justice is lacking. There will be no tranquillity as long as one part of the population enjoys the benefits of the system, flourishes in its blessings and participates in all its opportunities while a vast majority feels bad, powerless and marginalized, afflicted because daily living seems more like a slow and cruel agony, awaiting the inevitable.

We must not leave any room for extreme poverty to destroy the possibilities of the future. We cannot accept excuses or pretexts while in so many corners of the world entire families go to bed hoping that the caress of needed sleep will pacify the hunger in their empty stomachs. We must shorten the wait so that patience will not run out. Hence the renewed commitment emerging from the recent Assembly meeting that ordered the review of the Millennium Development Goals and the accelerated march imposed on us, so that we can fill the dimension of words with action.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, I wish to state that the Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Yemen delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report in document A/65/84 and to commend His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Hamidon Ali of Malaysia for his untiring efforts, as President of the Economic and Social Council, to revitalize and improve the working methods of that body. His "five musts" strategy may prove to be a worthy legacy for his successors and should indeed be applied to all other areas of work in the United Nations.

The full record of the Economic and Social Council's activities as contained in the pages of document A/65/3 reflects the comprehensive approach that that vital United Nations organ takes to its deliberations on the relevant topics. The rapid institutionalization of the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review shows the keen interest of Member States in participating in our discussions. The enhanced format of the Council's meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions also signals the crucial role that the Council and the United Nations have in discussions on global financial and economic matters, especially in the midst of the so called great recession from which we are now — or still tentatively — recovering.

The Philippines, as an active member of the Economic and Social Council, notes the landmark achievement of the creation of UN Women, which took place in the same year that the annual ministerial review focused precisely on the theme of implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Philippines — a country that has had two female Presidents and that considers itself to be a passionate advocate of the advancement of women's rights and welfare — similarly took significant steps forward with the passage of the Magna Carta of Women in August 2009 and the issuance of its Implementing Rules and Regulations in June this year.

The Magna Carta of Women is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors. Similar to what UN Women has done in the United Nations system, the Magna Carta has brought together the different government agencies and functions that deal with women's issues under the supervision of the Philippine Commission on Women.

The continued monitoring by the Economic and Social Council of issues relating to the advancement of women's rights and welfare is a reassuring fact that my country recognizes and supports. The Philippines similarly supports calls for strengthening the Development Cooperation Forum in order to reap the full benefit of its potential in harnessing the lessons learned in the Forum and linking them with the various development activities implemented within and outside the United Nations. The active exchange of ideas and the participation of countries during the Forum policy dialogues signify the value of the process in our discussions.

We would also like to underscore the importance of the past year's discussions of the Economic and Social Council's various segments, which cover a broad spectrum of issues. To go into each of those items would take too much time, but suffice it to say that such activities represent key development issues that affect all of us on a daily basis. Who would disagree that economic, social and environmental issues are the most crucial topics and preoccupy the majority of, if not all, members of the United Nations?

If only to highlight a few of the many issues in which the Philippines has particular interest, let me say that they would be the areas of humanitarian assistance, climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development in general. As a country that suffers from frequent natural disasters, many of which are weather-related, we can only hope that our discussions in the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions will be based on the greater common good and the legacy that we wish to leave to future generations.

Allow me then to conclude by pledging the Philippines' full support for the ongoing improvement of the working methods of the Economic and Social Council as it fulfils its pre-eminent role in key global discussions that will affect the lives of our peoples. We look forward to continuing our work under the very able leadership of Ambassador Hamidon Ali and share his hope that the Council will change with the times in order to remain relevant and proactive.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Peru associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also thank the Secretary-General for the report submitted under this agenda item (A/65/84), and we note with satisfaction the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3). We also wish to express our gratitude to the Council's President, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, and the Bureau supporting him for the important work undertaken.

This year, the effects of the international economic and financial crisis continue to affect the economic and social prospects for developing countries and, therefore, their possibilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The outcome of the review carried out at the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, held in September, showed that we, the developing countries, have made great progress towards achieving those Goals, but also that work remains for which greater commitment and cooperation by all global actors is needed (resolution 65/1).

With regard to efforts to recover from the crisis, it is extremely important to strengthen employment and social protection policies and to promote greater international cooperation so as to speed up and sustain the recovery, with particular attention to low- and middle-income countries. In that regard, the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council to accelerate implementation of the Global Jobs Pact was a very significant outcome of its work (Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/25). I would like to point out that the measures proposed by the Global Jobs Pact, in particular those related to investment in labour-intensive infrastructure and support for small- and medium-sized enterprises, have proved to be effective mechanisms to promote employment and to combat poverty in my country.

The possibility of developing countries, such as mine, continuing on the path of growth and addressing the effects of the crisis also depends, to a large extent, on a positive international environment. In that regard, we believe that the efforts to develop a constructive

dialogue among all actors involved in creating a new international financial architecture are particularly significant. To that end, the points of view of the smaller countries, which comprise the greater part of the United Nations, must be taken into account.

Similarly, we underscore the importance of international trade as an engine for development for a large number of countries, including mine, Peru. Thus, we reiterate the need to avoid any protectionist tendency and to move towards a prompt conclusion of the Doha Development Round. The annual meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held last spring, is an important forum to move our work forward in the appropriate direction.

The second Development Cooperation Forum, held in June, provided innovative discussions on that issue and concluded that, in the current global economic situation, official development assistance and financing for development continued to be crucial to guarantee progress in achieving the Development Goals.

We firmly believe that financial and technical development cooperation is also indispensable and such cooperation should seek to mobilize resources for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, whose development and strengthening provide an effective mechanism to combat poverty, as has been seen in my country. In that regard, promoting and strengthening financial cooperation for research, innovation and technology, as well as human resource training, are absolutely essential.

In that regard, we would like to point out that the operational activities segment, which focused on the work of Economic and Social Council at the country level, concluded that the United Nations system remains a reliable partner for developing countries in the area of capacity-building.

The ministerial meeting of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted the important declaration on "Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" at nearly the same time as the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women, was established. We believe that action to have been one of the Council's most significant contributions in 2010, acknowledging that gender equality and the empowerment of women play a central role in development and peace in the world.

The coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on the role of the United Nations system in implementing the 2009 ministerial declaration on global public health (Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/24). The Peruvian Government has made great achievements in the area of health. To continue along that path, we would like to reiterate the need for cooperation benefiting middle-income countries in the fight against HIV/AIDS and for greater attention to be given to non-communicable diseases.

To conclude, I must point out that a topic that must not be overlooked in our current and future work is climate change. Peru is particularly vulnerable, without having been a cause of that phenomenon. The worrying situation of the environmental degradation that we are currently experiencing means that adaptation to climate change must be a central element in international decisions on financing for development.

For all those reasons, we believe that the Economic and Social Council must keep on its agenda the item "Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development", including the many decisions that I have mentioned in this statement.

Mr. Kurlovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus commends the work of the Economic and Social Council in the reporting period and the Ambassador of Malaysia, Mr. Hamidon Ali, for his skilful leadership. I would like to emphasize the efficient organization of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, whose outcome made an important contribution to the work of the summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I would emphasize, in particular, the strengthening of the practical importance of that high-level segment for the entire United Nations system.

Belarus favours further strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council as the main body responsible for coordinating the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system, including reviewing policies and monitoring implementation of the MDGs. As part of that work, special emphasis should be placed on ensuring a system-wide

environment conducive to stimulating fair international trade and providing expertise and technical assistance to developing and middle-income countries.

We welcome the relatively new methodologies in the work of the Economic and Social Council. We believe that the Economic and Social Council has considerably strengthened its structure and capacity through annual ministerial reviews. We believe that that mechanism, with its powerful mobilizing impact, should be further strengthened. The Development Cooperation Forum has become an important mobilizing and coordination factor of the Economic and Social Council.

We think that the ministerial meetings, annual reviews and the Development Cooperation Forum should become the main platforms for discussing agenda issues related to achieving the MDGs and the United Nations development agenda after 2015. In that connection, Belarus believes that the Assembly should consider enhancing the role of the Forum, including strengthening its institutional status and the frequency of its meetings and the preparation of its outcome documents.

One of the most important aspects of the ministerial reviews is the system of voluntary national presentations on the achievement of development targets, which serve as a unique mechanism for accountability and feedback on the achievement of the MDGs. They clearly point the way towards implementation of global priorities at the national level. That is why we welcome the positive trend to expand this practice. My delegation notes that Belarus will submit its national report at the 2011 session of the Economic and Social Council.

Belarus believes it is necessary to take into consideration the consequences of climate change in the long-term strategies on financing for development and developing a green economy.

An important factor in achieving the MDGs is to shape a new architecture in the energy field in order to ensure universal access to energy services. As part of this process, special attention should be paid to the open exchange of environmentally friendly and affordable energy technologies. Unfortunately, energy issues have not yet become a priority on the United Nations agenda. At the same time, without access to modern energy resources, an adequate level of human development will clearly be unattainable.

Belarus supports the practice of periodic reviews of operational activities for development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. At the same time, in order to make this work more efficient, the Council agenda should include periodic Government opinion surveys on the impact and significance of support provided by the United Nations system.

We support further review of the predictability and adequacy of funding sources for development activities. Given the reduction in core resources, we believe it is important to strengthen the transparency of the donor system to finance development and to establish a flexible system of cooperation between recipient countries, donors and the United Nations system.

Belarus commends the holding of high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the participation of representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization. We think that this practice should be continued. At the same time, we suggest considering optimizing the agenda of the joint meetings with special emphasis on their efficiency with regard to restructuring the international financial architecture and turning it into a driving force of equitable economic growth.

The main responsibility for ensuring that decisions adopted at the various conferences and summits of the United Nations are implemented lies with the specialized agencies of the United Nations. In order to ensure successful monitoring of the implementation of those decisions and the resulting activities a closer relationship among the governing bodies of the United Nations is important — first and foremost between the Economic and Social Council and the other specialized agencies. We wish the Economic and Social Council every success in implementing this important task.

Mr. Savostianov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the Economic and Social Council for presenting the Council's report (A/65/3) and also to thank the Secretariat for supporting the work of the Council during the current year. The Russian Federation has consistently favoured strengthening the role of the United Nations as one of

the principal forums for coordinating multilateral development efforts and developing the basic standards on international cooperation in the economic, humanitarian and environmental spheres. In that context, the work of the Economic and Social Council is now of significant priority. It possesses all of the necessary mechanisms to conduct fruitful discussions on all key global and intersectoral economic issues with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

In the current year, the Council's agenda included important tasks related, inter alia, to preparations for the United Nations summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), also to promoting the international agenda in the area of financing for development and strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring a more effective response to the negative consequences of the global financial and economic crisis.

Russia is satisfied with the results of the main session of the Economic and Social Council this year, including the Annual Ministerial Review of the progress in implementation of the MDGs and the Development Cooperation Forum.

We note the intensive and useful work accomplished in the framework of the coordination, operation and humanitarian segments of the session. That clearly confirmed the very important role played by the Economic and Social Council in ensuring the coherence of the entire system, which is very important for comprehensive, coordinated implementation of decisions by global forums in the economic, social and related fields.

This year, the Economic and Social Council has effectively shown itself to be an integral part of the intergovernmental process of follow-up to the outcomes of international conferences dedicated to financing for development. We welcome the successful organization in March of the special high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the participation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We are convinced that the Council should continue to make a tangible contribution to the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the international, financial and trade institutions, as well as other key participants in the post-Monterrey process, which includes non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

In the course of the current session of the General Assembly, the Assembly will have to review progress in implementing resolution 61/16, which defined the new functions of the Economic and Social Council as decided in the political agreements reached at the 2005 World Summit. We think that any decisions on any future strengthening of the Economic and Social Council should be aimed first and foremost at ensuring the effective work of the Council in support of efforts by Member States and United Nations entities implementing the programme of action adopted at the United Nations summit on the Millennium Development Goals. Work to implement the decisions of the summit will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach. It will require articulating the policies and programmes of the United Nations system with national priorities and strategies and with the goals and challenges of the development agenda. It will require organizing effective intergovernmental monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. We are convinced that those goals can be reached within the current format and structure of the main session of the Council.

The main platform for a systematic and comprehensive monitoring of progress in the implementation of the MDGs is, in our view, the annual ministerial review. The choice of theme for the reviews for the period covering 2012-2015 will be decisive. We support strengthening the Development Cooperation Forum as a useful multilateral format in which the major, dynamically developing economies can participate fully in the process of decision-making and in developing new approaches to providing assistance. That is one of the priority goals and is a premise for strengthening the international architecture for development assistance.

An important area of work in optimizing the agenda of the Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind the decisions of the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, is to adjust the mandates of the segments of the main session of the Council, including a clearer definition of the goals of the coordination segment. We also think that there is potential for strengthening the Council in the process of moving away from emergency assistance and towards more long-term assistance in cases of natural disasters and also in the

context of post-conflict peacebuilding. It is clear that this work should be carried out with the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in mind. Of course, all of these steps should not undermine the role of the Council as the coordinator of the programme activity of the various socio-economic bodies of the United Nations.

The delegation of the Russian Federation is ready to cooperate in a constructive fashion with all partners in order to further strengthen the Economic and Social Council. We think that the upcoming review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 during this session of the General Assembly will give further impetus to the work of the Council as the most important mechanism for developing and agreeing on the major political decisions in the area of development. The review will also make it possible for the Council to become a more dynamic and more effective body of the United Nations.

Mr. Koterec (Slovakia): Slovakia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium, who spoke on behalf of the European Union.

The most recent session of the Economic and Social Council had many significant moments. We witnessed the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women, which was an important step towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and strengthening their voice worldwide. The annual ministerial review has proved itself to be a strong instrument for discussing key issues in the economic and social fields. The ministerial declaration that was adopted was very results-oriented and presented a solid base for a successful High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was held in September. The numerous national voluntary presentations during the review revealed national approaches and experiences, pointing out success stories as well as shortcomings. All the best practices that were presented offered valuable ideas in helping many countries to move forward faster.

A year ago, Slovakia was one of 18 Member States elected to serve on the Economic and Social Council. During the initial period of our term, we have done our best to be an active and transparent team partner in one of the most important bodies of the United Nations system. We consider the Economic and Social Council to be a body with great potential to make significant contributions to solving the problems of today's world.

Nearly four years have gone by since the adoption of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. A lot of work has been done, and I would like to thank the President of the Council, His Excellency Ambassador Hamidon Ali, as well as his predecessors, for the work they have done, especially since 2007.

Nevertheless, there is still much work to do to strengthen the role of the Council as the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals.

It is crucial that more emphasis be put on system-wide coordination and integration, on carrying out new programmes and policies in the economic, social and humanitarian fields, and on promoting global dialogue and closer cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system. For example, why do we not attempt to take advantage of the potential for closer collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council? Many of the issues dealt with by those two bodies are linked, and I am convinced that more visible results could be achieved in a shorter amount of time, if those linkages were explored. The Peacebuilding Commission is an important aspect of that link. The current review of the Commission's work suggests that it could play a greater role in the future.

In this period of pressing need for the innovative use of resources, one can see a possibility for another pragmatic change in the work of the Economic and Social Council, namely, in the general segment. With each passing year, the Council's agenda is increasingly overburdened. Many of the issues it deals with overlap with those addressed in the General Assembly and its Committees and are thus unnecessarily discussed twice. We must reverse that negative trend, if we are to save the expertise and energy of the Council for the core issues in its purview.

Furthermore, Slovakia supports strengthening the position of the Development Cooperation Forum, which should evolve into a forum that generates new

ideas and models, emphasizes wide coordination, and speaks with a stronger political voice. For that reason, we suggest considering holding Forum meetings on a yearly basis.

Slovakia will continue to strive to be a trustworthy and innovative partner. All of us can contribute to the work of the Economic and Social Council by being responsible and pragmatic in our efforts.

Mr. Saripudin (Indonesia): It is my honour to address the General Assembly in the joint debate on agenda items 9 and 13. Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me express my sincere and deep appreciation to Ambassador Hamidon Ali of Malaysia for his able leadership during this year's session of the Economic and Social Council. I also thank the Secretary-General for his note submitted under agenda item 9 (A/65/216) and for his reported submitted under agenda item 13 (A/65/84).

The General Assembly of the United Nations has advanced the reduction of poverty, together with other related development issues, either individually or in combination, through United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose deadline has been set for 2015, have served as an important platform for emphasizing the synergies among the outcomes of the conferences and summits. Each of the Goals has a direct impact on the others. Therefore, to succeed in any one of them requires progress on all of them. Accordingly, the progress with regard to the MDGs is a vital part of the effective implementation of resolution 57/270 B.

During the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September, there was broad consensus in favour of more vigorous action to enable all countries to achieve the MDGs. Economic growth and development were recognized as an important avenue for meeting the Goals. However, none of us can perform that task in isolation — no Government, however well-intentioned, no private sector, however generous, no non-governmental organization, however determined.

We can meet the MDGs only through a genuine global partnership for development. The Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and the Doha Development Round provide the frameworks for the global partnership for development, and it is important that the commitments laid out in those frameworks be fully implemented.

Just as we reached the 10 year mark for the MDGs this year, the Economic and Social Council emphasized the strategic link between gender and the achievement of the MDGs. Indonesia therefore welcomes the decision to establish UN Women. We hope that having a dedicated gender entity in the United Nations, led by Ms. Bachelet, will enhance coherence, effectiveness and efficiency in United Nations operational activities and norm-setting on gender matters. We hope that it will further support the implementation of action-oriented strategies and integrated, comprehensive, multisectoral and gender-responsive approaches.

Recognizing prevalent gender inequalities, the 2010 ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council rightly emphasized measures to address the inequalities constraining women, through their root causes. Health was identified as a major obstacle to the advancement of women. The Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and its Joint Action Plan are important initiatives that Indonesia has been supporting from their inception. Gender gaps have been further compounded by the economic and financial crisis. It is therefore crucial to effectively address that crisis in order to advance the gender theme of the Economic and Social Council this year.

Given the importance of accelerating progress on the MDGs, all stakeholders, including the United Nations, need to continue to play an active role. Indonesia appreciates and commends the efforts of the entire United Nations system to improve its effectiveness through various actions. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report in document A/65/84 recommends that a United Nations-based mechanism be established to review the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs (resolution 65/1). The strengthened function of the Economic and Social Council makes it strategically placed to fulfil that role. The Economic and Social Council could perform this function through the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. The recommendation in the Secretary-General's report merits further consideration.

As for Indonesia, we have integrated the MDGs into our national development strategy. Through two presidential decrees this year, the Government is going to accelerate implementation of the 2010 national development priorities and promote justice in a national development programme. The decrees provide a vital link among development actors from the national to the subnational levels to coordinate and integrate pro-people development with the establishment of justice for all and the accelerated achievement of the MDGs.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): First of all, I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his report on recent improvements to the working methods of the Economic and Social Council and its role in follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits (A/65/84).

We wish to commend the strong leadership of Ambassador Ali and his predecessors in advancing meaningful improvements to the working methods of the Economic and Social Council and greatly enhancing its relevance and contributions to the United Nations development system. The strengthening of the annual ministerial review and its focus on key thematic issues related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ensured that the Economic and Social Council played a vital role in the MDG summit. The United States was pleased to have joined others this year in making our national voluntary presentation on gender equality and women's empowerment and to have an opportunity to exchange views and valuable information and experiences with other delegations.

Our delegation was also pleased at the balance and breadth of discussion at this year's biennial Development Cooperation Forum, which continues to develop in its discussion of development assistance and cooperation. In this regard, the United States supports maintaining the current format and frequency of biennial Development Cooperation Forum meetings, which allows more time for broader reflection than annual meetings. The United States also wishes to express support for ongoing efforts to streamline and better rationalize the agenda items of the Council. Regarding follow-up to the MDG summit, we note that the outcome document clearly outlines follow-up arrangements, which can be found in paragraphs 79 through 81.

Mr. Almeida (Brazil): Brazil fully endorses the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to take this opportunity to warmly commend the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, for his leadership at the head of that important body, particularly during its substantive session in July.

The current debate on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3) and on the integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits in economic, social and related fields further underscores the importance of the Economic and Social Council as the mandated body within the United Nations structure for promoting coordination, coherence and cooperation in the United Nations system. Brazil believes that only a strengthened and revitalized Economic and Social Council can fully contribute to international policy discussions and deliberations on substantive issues of development.

During the current session of the General Assembly, Member States will have an important opportunity to review the progress to date and examine additional measures to further improve the workings of the Economic and Social Council. As an enthusiastic supporter of the Council, Brazil is certainly ready and willing to participate actively in this discussion.

Brazil recognizes that there have been important initiatives over the past few years to improve inter-institutional and intergovernmental coordination by the Economic and Social Council. The annual ministerial review has evolved and matured to become an increasingly important event on the international agenda, capable of mobilizing high-level officials from developing and developed countries alike. It offers a key opportunity for reviewing progress on specific policy questions relevant to the international community and for making concrete recommendations that can be acted upon by all Member States. It certainly can be improved upon, but its general design rests on solid foundations and important accomplishments.

The Development Cooperation Forum is also a significant innovation that merits our full support. It has contributed to promoting coordination and exchanging information on relevant development cooperation issues, such as official development assistance and South-South cooperation. It is one of the

rare bodies that brings together practitioners and policymakers to discuss issues related to the quality and quantity of cooperation for development.

Despite the progress achieved so far, Brazil believes that the Development Cooperation Forum should be further strengthened as the main forum for discussions in the United Nations system on development cooperation issues. In this regard, we should explore the possibility of increasing the frequency of the Development Cooperation Forum's meetings and of introducing a negotiated outcome to its deliberations.

The Chief Executives Board for Coordination is playing an increasing role in promoting coordination at the administrative level among the 28 agencies that form the United Nations system. Brazil notes with appreciation the progress achieved in various areas, including in relation to the integrated response of the United Nations system to the economic and financial crisis. However, we would also like to highlight the fact that some of the initiatives proposed by the Board to address the crisis seem to lack both a clear definition and a precise mandate from Member States. This is the case, for instance, of initiatives related to the concept of green economy, which has not yet been fully discussed by Member States.

It is encouraging to learn that the Chief Executives Board for Coordination has attempted to strengthen substantive dialogue with Member States on its ongoing work in opportunities such as the system-wide coherence consultations and on the global crisis. But Brazil would once again insist on the need to align the Secretariat's substantive action with existing intergovernmental mandates and priorities.

Brazil also believes that additional measures are warranted to improve coordination and oversight of actions and initiatives taken by the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. In view of the responsibilities of the specialized agencies in the follow-up, implementation and monitoring of the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call for closer cooperation between their governing bodies and the United Nations, most notably the Economic and Social Council.

Brazil is generally pleased with the progress obtained in the first full year of operation of the strengthened intergovernmental follow-up mechanism to the financing for development process. We welcome in particular the participation by the President of the Economic and Social Council in the Bretton Woods institutions spring meetings, and hope this practice can be expanded in the future to include the World Trade Organization.

The multifaceted follow-up mechanism adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2009 is a step in the right direction, ensuring the continuous consideration of financing for development issues throughout the year. Nevertheless, we would like to recall that the Monterrey Conference is the only major United Nations summit in the field of development that did not result in the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental body to oversee and promote the implementation of its outcome. Brazil considers that this shortcoming needs to be redressed with the establishment of a functional commission on financing for development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda items 9 and 13.

I join with colleagues who have commended Ambassador Ali of Malaysia for his sterling leadership of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 13.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/65/L.5)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 32nd and 33rd plenary meetings, on 18 October 2010, the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 14, "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", and agenda item 15.

I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, Personal Envoy and Special Adviser to His Majesty the King of Jordan to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.5.

Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad (Jordan): I have the honour to introduce on behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the 27 other sponsors — Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kuwait,

Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Paraguay, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Yemen — draft resolution A/65/L.5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week".

Allow me to explain in brief the reasoning behind this draft resolution, which was launched by his Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein before the General Assembly on 23 September 2010 (see A/65/PV.12).

As this Assembly is well aware, our world is rife with religious tension and, sadly, mistrust, dislike and hatred. These religious tensions can easily erupt into communal violence. They also facilitate the demonizing of the other, which in turn predisposes public opinion to support war against peoples of other religions. Thus, for example, according to the results of a 2008 Gallup poll, one of the largest international surveys on religion in history, 53 per cent of Westerners have unfavourable or very unfavourable opinions of Muslims and 30 per cent of Muslims polled worldwide hold negative views of Christians.

The misuse or abuse of religions can thus be a cause of world strife, whereas religions should be a great foundation for facilitating world peace. The remedy for this problem can come only from the world's religions themselves. Religions must be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Much good work has already been done towards this, starting really with the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965, by hundreds of intra-faith and interfaith groups all over the world and of all religions.

Yet the forces inciting interreligious tensions, notable among them being religious fundamentalisms of various kinds, are better organized, more experienced, better coordinated, more motivated and more ruthless. They have more stratagems, more institutes, more money and more power and garner more publicity, such that they by far outweigh all the positive work done by the various interfaith initiatives. The sad proof of this is that religious tensions are on the rise, not on the decline.

The draft resolution before us seeks to turn the tide against this negative movement, first, by coordinating and uniting the efforts of all the interfaith groups doing positive work with one focused theme at one specific time annually, thereby increasing their collective momentum and eliminating redundancy.

Secondly, the draft resolution seeks to harness and utilize the collective might of the world's second-largest infrastructure, that of places of worship — the largest being that of education — specifically for peace and harmony in the world, inserting, as it were, the right "software" into the world's religious "hardware".

Thirdly, the draft resolution seeks to permanently and regularly encourage the silent majority of preachers to declare themselves for peace and harmony and to provide a ready-made vehicle for them to do so. Moreover, if preachers and teachers commit themselves on the record once a year to peace and harmony, this means that when the next interreligious crisis or provocation occurs, they cannot then relapse into parochial fear and mistrust, and will be more likely to resist the winds of popular demagoguery.

Turning to the text itself, allow me to explain some of its most essential terminology and concepts.

First, in the very title of the draft resolution and in the second operative paragraph and elsewhere, the word "harmony" is used in the Chinese sense of the term. We add it to the term "tolerance", which we have also used, because tolerance can suggest that the other is so negative that it has to be tolerated. We cannot use "acceptance" because it implies that religions accept each other's doctrines, rather than their right to those doctrines, and this is not the case. We cannot use the term "peace" alone because it suggests merely the absence of war and not necessarily the absence of hatred. Only the Confucian concept of harmony can rescue us here because it suggests not merely peace, but also beautiful and dynamic interaction between different elements within a whole.

Secondly, in paragraph 3 there is a mention of "love of God and love of one's neighbour or love of the good and love of one's neighbour". Why is this religious reference necessary in a United Nations resolution? In answer to this question, it will be noted first that the draft resolution is unique because it is specifically about peace among religions and not about anything else; therefore, some religious references in this particular case are only natural. To rigidly maintain the contrary would be to disregard the feelings of 85 per cent of the world's population that belongs to one or another faith.

Thirdly, and more importantly perhaps, we include these references because, while we all agree that it is clearly not the business of the United Nations to engage

in theology, it is nevertheless the primary goal of the United Nations to make and safeguard peace, and without the specific mention of God and of the two commandments of love, many — if not most — devout Muslims, Christians and Jews will consider a secular call for an interfaith harmony week to be a feckless platitude that they cannot fully or sincerely support. For in the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ said, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (*Matthew 4:4*) and "hallowed be thy name" (*Matthew 6:9*). Similar meanings are to be found in the Holy Koran, wherein it is stated that no act is rewarded save for seeking "the Countenance of the Lord, the Most High" (*XCII:20*) and that verily "the remembrance of God is of all things the greatest" (*XXIX:45*).

In other words, for many Muslims, Christians and Jews — who together make up perhaps 55 per cent of the world's population and, I regret to say, are involved in most of the world's conflicts — it is necessary to mention the substance of their faiths. Otherwise, hoping to foster peace between religions by foisting upon them an external and purely secular and bureaucratic language is simply a house divided against itself that shall not stand.

Fourthly, it will be noted that this language excludes no one of any religion or of no faith at all. Every person of goodwill, with or without faith, can and should commit to love of the neighbour and love of God or love of the neighbour and love of the good. Loving one's neighbour and the good is, after all, the essence of goodwill, and referring to the good obviously does not necessarily imply belief in God or in a particular religion, even though for many believers the good is God precisely. Jesus Christ said, "No one is good but God Alone" (*The Holy Bible, Mark 10:18*) and "the good" — "*Al-Barr*" — is one of God's names in the Holy Koran. Thus, speaking of the good is a theologically correct but inclusive formula — insofar as it goes — that unites all humankind and leaves out no one.

Fifthly, there is another reason why it is specifically necessary to mention love of the neighbour. It sets an invaluable, practical standard based upon which people can ask themselves and each other if their actions stem from *caritas* — love — towards their neighbour or not. Indeed, as the Prophet Muhammad said, "None of you has faith until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself".

Also in paragraph 3, the phrase "on a voluntary basis" is used because the entire proposal must be purely voluntary. No place of worship should be forced to observe the World Interfaith Harmony Week for, while we hope to encourage interfaith harmony, the last thing we want is for anyone at all to feel that anything is being imposed on his or her faith, beliefs or convictions. Nevertheless, one can conceive of positive incentives to encourage and help support and monitor the implementation of the draft resolution.

Finally, and also in paragraph 3, the phrase "each according to their own religious traditions or convictions" is vital because the different religions do not necessarily interpret love of God and one's neighbour in exactly the same way and do not want it said that they do. This phrase thus avoids the dangers of syncretism or reductionism and allows for religious differences within the same goal of working towards interreligious peace and harmony.

In summary then, I very humbly ask the Member States of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.5 on the World Interfaith Harmony Week, noting that it excludes no individual, compromises no one, commits no one, forces no one, harms no one and costs nothing, and, on the contrary, includes everyone, celebrates everyone, benefits everyone, unites everyone and has the potential to bring much-needed peace and harmony to the entire world.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week."

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat to announce the additional co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

Mr. Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I wish to inform the General Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Suriname and Tunisia have asked to be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/65/L.5.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.5?

Draft resolution A/65/L.5 was adopted (resolution 65/5).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind

delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Burniat (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on resolution 65/5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week", which was just adopted.

The European Union would like to extend its thanks to the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the constructive spirit in which it led the consultation process on the resolution, as well as for its readiness to incorporate in the resolution a number of suggestions put forward by the European Union.

The European Union welcomes any call for dialogue, peace, tolerance and mutual understanding among peoples and nations. It is in this spirit that the European Union joined the consensus on the resolution based on the following understanding of some fundamental issues raised therein.

It is an established fact that religions, beliefs and faith cannot be considered actors under international law. Therefore, the European Union joined the consensus in the understanding that the reference to dialogue among religions, faiths and beliefs in the second preambular paragraph and paragraph 1 refers to dialogue among individuals with different religions, faiths and beliefs. As in other areas, any obligation of States with regard to religious affairs exists not vis-à-vis any religion, faith or belief as such, but solely towards individuals or groups of individuals and in full respect for both the individual's freedom of religion or belief and the independence of religious institutions in matters of belief.

The European Union is therefore of the view that the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 3 cannot be read as giving States a mandate to influence the manner in which individuals relate to their faith or beliefs or to impose their views on the substance or manner of any interreligious or intra-religious discourse.

Furthermore, some European Union member States have regulations and policies whereby the State is strictly separated from any religion. Therefore, we do not feel compelled to intervene in religious discourses in places of worship. However, the European Union fully subscribes to the wish expressed in the resolution for respect and understanding among follow rs of all religions, faiths and beliefs.

While acknowledging the importance of interreligious dialogue, the European Union wishes to state that both interreligious and intra religious dialogues are additional and complementary components of intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace. Religion or faith may constitute part of the multiple identities of individuals, but it is our understanding that by solely addressing one of the sources of identity, the resolution does not wish to imply the lesser importance of the others. In this respect, the European Union would like to highlight the roles of UNESCO in promoting all aspects of intercultural dialogue and of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.

Finally, the European Union wishes to state its understanding that the call for interfaith harmony expressed in the resolution and for dialogue among religions, faiths and beliefs in the second preambular paragraph and in paragraph 1 is not limited to specific monotheistic religions or beliefs, for example, but is in fact meant to include all followers of any religion, faith or belief in a universal and inclusive manner.

Mr. Michelsen (Norway): Norway would like to thank Jordan for the manner in which it conducted the negotiations up to their successful conclusion today. Norway welcomes this important initiative, as we recognize the importance of peaceful coexistence among individuals of different religions and faiths and the importance of interreligious dialogue in promoting peace and understanding.

For the record, we would like to add that we fully subscribe to the understanding just provided by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union of some of the fundamental issues raised in the resolution.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad (Jordan): Forgive me for taking the floor again, but I wish only to thank delegations, and in particular the now 31 sponsors, for the constructive spirit in which they engaged with us throughout the process of negotiations. In this context,

we would like to assure the members of the European Union that we agree with the fine distinctions they presented in their explanation after the vote, and we are grateful to them for their support and contribution.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): We welcome the adoption of resolution 65/5 on World Interfaith Harmony Week and the initiative undertaken by the delegation of Jordan. On this occasion, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad and to thank Jordan for introducing this noble initiative. We are honoured to co-sponsor the resolution and pleased to see it embraced by the wider membership. This shows the commitment of the world community to making the world more peaceful and harmonious for future generations.

We believe that this call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding will further contribute to the promotion of a global culture of peace around the world. For its part, Turkey will continue its efforts to promote our common values of peace, tolerance and respect for humanity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the delegation of Jordan for having brought forward resolution 65/5 on promoting goodwill among religions in order to advance a culture of peace. For several years now, the United Nations has taken up consideration of this agenda item. Over 10 years ago, Member States adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243), and not long thereafter adopted the first resolution on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation.

The creation of a culture of peace among the peoples of the world is not a task to be taken lightly. All persons have a responsibility each and every day to promote peace, tolerance and mutual respect among all persons of the various religions traditions. Setting aside a week in the coming year for the purpose of raising consciousness regarding our common commitment in this regard certainly highlights the importance of this responsibility and can be instrumental in concretely translating love of God into love of neighbour, which means not only those of our own religious tradition, but each and every person, because everyone has dignity and value.

My delegation commends the manner in which the mission of Jordan carried out consultations regarding the present resolution. Some of my delegation's proposals were taken into consideration. At the same time, however, my delegation hoped that the resolution would have focused more on the importance of dialogue among religions at the institutional and authoritative levels.

In this regard, for example, one thinks of the various formal responses to A Common Word Between Us and You, including the Catholic-Muslim forum, which is an ongoing initiative in which many scholars of both religions have been meeting on a regular basis to advance interreligious dialogue. Moreover, the resolution does not clearly express the difference between faith at a personal level and religion at a more institutional level. In this sense, my delegation would have liked to have the title of the resolution changed from "World Interfaith Harmony Week' to "Worldwide Week of Interreligious Dialogue/Understanding" or "Worldwide Week of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue". So too, my delegation would have preferred the word "interreligious" in the text, instead of "interfaith"; and the misleading word "harmony" replaced with "dialogue", "respect" or "tolerance".

Respect for religious and cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world contributes to international cooperation and promotes enhanced dialogue among religions and persons. On the occasion of the adoption of the text before us, my delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm its ongoing commitment to promoting mutual understanding, respect, dialogue and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of all other religious traditions.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.35

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

35th plenary meeting
Monday, 25 October 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 30 September 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/65/526)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will first proceed to a by-election to elect members of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

In that connection, I would first like to draw the attention of members to document A/65/526, which contains a letter dated 30 September 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations. In his letter, the Permanent Representative announces, in his capacity as the Chair of the Group of Western European and other States, that Turkey will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council at the end of 2010 for the remainder of its term in favour of Spain, and that Liechtenstein will relinquish its seat on the Council at the end of 2010 for the remainder of its term in favour of Switzerland. As a result, two vacancies will occur and new members must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired terms of office of Liechtenstein and Turkey, commencing on 1 January 2011 and expiring on 31 December 2011.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account that the vacancies will occur from among the Group of Western European and other States, the new members should therefore be elected from that region.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidates that receive the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of the votes by members present and voting will be declared elected. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. We shall now proceed accordingly.

I should like to inform members that, as of 1 January 2011, the following States from the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Malta and the United States of America. The names of those seven States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Please recycle

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Allow me to remind members that they are now voting in the by-election for two seats for the Group of Western European and other States. The election of eighteen members of the Council will take place immediately following this by-election.

Ballot papers will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed and to write on them the name of the two States for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains the names of more than two Member States from the relevant region for the two vacant seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if the name of a Member State on that ballot does not belong to the relevant region.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Francisco (Angola), Mr. Babić (Croatia), Ms. Maskay (France), Ms. Del Águila-Castillo (Guatemala), Mr. Visonnavong (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Mr. Dosseh (Togo) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 10.50 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Western European and other States (2 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	186
Number of invalid ballots:	4
Number of valid ballots:	182
Abstentions:	5
Number of members voting:	177
Required two-thirds majority:	118
Number of votes obtained:	
Spain	162
Switzerland	160
United Kingdom	7
Finland	7
Australia	5
Norway	4
Turkey	2
Austria	1
Liechtenstein	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Spain and Switzerland were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2011 and ending on 31 December 2011.

The President (*spoke in French*): I congratulate Spain and Switzerland on having been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly will next turn to the election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2010.

I give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): I have the honour to inform this body that the Government of Nepal has decided to withdraw its candidacy for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the period 2011 to 2013, for which the election is now being held.

Allow me also to report that my Government has decided to present its candidacy for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the period 2013 to 2015. My Government would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Governments that have already expressed their support for our candidacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): The eighteen outgoing members are: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Finland, Malaysia, Mozambique, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay. Pursuant to rule 146 of the rules of procedure, those countries are eligible for immediate re-election.

Members will recall that Liechtenstein and Turkey relinquished their seats on the Council, effective 1 January 2011, and that Spain and Switzerland have just been elected to fill those vacancies.

Consequently, as of 1 January 2011, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Malta, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, the

United States of America, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zambia. The names of those 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2011, the 18 members should be elected as follows: four from African States, four from Asian States, three from Eastern European States, three from Latin American and Caribbean States and four from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

I should like to inform the General Assembly that those candidates — their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — that receive a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by members present and voting, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

With regard to candidatures of the respective regional Groups, the Secretariat has been informed of the following. For the four vacant seats from among the African States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Cameroon, Gabon, Malawi and Senegal. For the four vacant seats from among the Asian States, there are five candidates: Bahrain, China, Pakistan, Qatar and the Republic of Korea. For the three vacant seats from among the Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed Hungary, Latvia and the Russian Federation. For the three vacant seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua. For the four vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Australia, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked A, B, C, D and E will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot belongs to the relevant region. If a ballot paper of a region contains the names of one or more Member States that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Francisco (Angola), Mr. Babić (Croatia), Ms. Maskay (France), Ms. Del Águila-Castillo (Guatemala), Mr. Visonnavong (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Mr. Dosseh (Togo) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m., with Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African States (4 seats)	
Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	189
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	189
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
Senegal	187
Gabon	185

Malawi	184
Cameroon	183

Group B — Asian States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	190
Required two-thirds majority:	127
Number of votes obtained:	
China	150
Republic of Korea	150
Pakistan	149
Qatar	145
Bahrain	137
Nepal	1

Group C — Eastern European States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	187
Required two-thirds majority:	125
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation	182
Hungary	175
Latvia	155
Lithuania	17
Bulgaria	13
Poland	1
Republic of Moldova	1

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	189
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
Mexico	184
Ecuador	182
Nicaragua	180

Group E — Western European and other States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	189
Abstentions:	8
Number of members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Finland	177
Norway	177
Australia	171
United Kingdom	170
Austria	2

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority of members present and voting, the following 18 States were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2011: Australia, Cameroon, China, Ecuador, Finland, Gabon, Hungary, Latvia, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Acting President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 111.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations

A/65/PV.36

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

36th plenary meeting

New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 41

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.3)

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at this plenary meeting on agenda item 41, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The Group of 77 and China has always been firmly against the embargo. At the second South Summit, held in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 16 June 2005, heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries. They called on the Government of the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. That embargo, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law and to the principle of good-neighbourliness, causes huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate once again its long-standing position on this important matter. At their recently held thirty-fourth annual meeting, which took place on 28 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Group of 77 and China,

> "firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten freedom of trade and investment. They therefore called on the international community to neither recognize these measures nor apply them." (*A/65/486, annex, para. 69*)

The Group of 77 and China notes the communications from Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 64/6 (A/65/83). Sadly, they demonstrate unequivocally that the embargo remains largely unchanged and continues to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. Furthermore, the deepening impact of the global economic crisis on

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Cuba, along with the continued embargo by the Government of the United States, will further aggravate the hardships that the people of Cuba are experiencing.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the United States to heed the international community's increasing calls to bring an end to the five-decade embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sisterly country. The embargo frustrates efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and negatively affects regional cooperation in the area.

The Group of 77 and China are committed to working towards a better world for all in which nations, large and small, can peacefully coexist. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence among States requires adherence by all to the cardinal principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful conduct of relations among nations.

The Group of 77 and China will again fully support the draft resolution against the embargo (A/65/L.3) and urges all Member States to do so as well.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, given the long list of speakers inscribed on my list, I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item now be closed. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly today on behalf of the 118 Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and to start by extending a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and expressing to him the Movement's full support.

Two days ago, on 24 October, we celebrated United Nations Day, the anniversary of the day on which the Organization officially came into existence 65 years ago, when 50 nations, big and small, jointly proclaimed their resolve to realize a set of noble aims based on timeless values and undying ideals and decided to eternalize them in the United Nations Charter. Today, the Non-Aligned Movement once again reaffirms its unwavering commitment to uphold, preserve and promote those principles and to ensure the continued viability of all the provisions of international law, which together constitute the very essence of our multilateral work and guide our collective efforts to maintain international peace and security, achieve lasting economic growth and sustainable development and ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is in that context that the Non-Aligned Movement finds it disturbing that unilateral measures and laws of a coercive nature are still being adopted and implemented against countries of the Movement — measures and laws that prevent them from exercising their right to freely decide their own political systems and the economic and social regimes of their preference. We cannot but firmly reject such violations of multilateralism and call for their immediate end. We also appeal to all States to refrain from recognizing such measures or laws and to support the claim of affected countries to compensation for any damage incurred as a result of this breach of internationally agreed norms of conduct.

This year, the President of the General Assembly has wisely chosen as the theme for the Assembly's sixty-fifth session "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance". But that can only happen if all countries of the United Nations respect the rules that govern multilateralism and refrain from taking measures that defy the principles of the Charter, the norms of international law and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, good-neighbourliness and mutual trust. The embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba undoubtedly runs counter to those principles and raises many questions. How can a country put up obstacles to the freedom of commerce of one of its neighbours when it continuously calls for nations to trade freely? How can a country impose limits on the right of its people to travel when it strongly advocates the freedom of movement? The Non-Aligned Movement is bewildered by those apparent contradictions and believes that they should be promptly rectified.

To that end, the United States should once and for all end its embargo against Cuba. It is the longest and toughest system of sanctions that the United States has ever applied against any country throughout its history. This is not only the demand of Cuba or of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, as clearly expressed by their heads of State and Government at the

Movement's fifteenth summit conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in July 2009; it is the demand of 187 countries of the United Nations, which last year voted in favour of resolution 64/6, the eighteenth resolution to be adopted by the Assembly on the issue. We once again urge the United States to immediately and fully comply with all General Assembly resolutions calling for the immediate end of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

I am sure that members will agree with me that there is no need for a detailed exposé of the damage that the embargo is causing to the economic and social development of Cuba and to the welfare of its people. We are all aware of the detrimental repercussions of the embargo, not only on the financial, banking, trade, investment and tourism sectors of the Cuban economy but also on health, nutrition, water quality, education and culture. The evidence on the ground is a stark reminder of what the embargo has done to Cuba. Furthermore, this unilateral blockade has an extended effect on companies and citizens from third countries. It thus violates the sovereign rights of many other countries. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo, which we consider an added argument in favour of the prompt elimination of those unjustified sanctions.

The Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement has stood here before the Assembly year after year and urged the United States to remain true to the words that the founding fathers of the United Nations clearly inscribed in the Charter by taking the necessary steps to swiftly lift the embargo it is imposing against Cuba. In a period increasingly characterized by international cooperation to address challenges to our very existence and to ensure the welfare of our peoples, maintaining the embargo seems to be part of an era long gone. The United States Administration should now more than ever match its statements about openness and engagement with the outside world to actions that would be welcomed by the international community, which will soon vote in favour of the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the embargo on Cuba (A/65/L.3). The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to send this message to the United States: end the blockade now. I express the expectation that this time our call will not go unheard.

Mr. Bowler (Malawi): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly. Let me join my colleague who spoke before me to add Malawi's voice and that of the Group of African States to the call regarding the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, which has been on the United Nations agenda for the past 18 years.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, the continent of Africa and as Chair of the African Union, I reiterate the decision of the fifteenth Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, which met in Kampala, Uganda, on 27 July 2010. On taking a decision on the issue of sanctions on Cuba, the African Union called upon the Government of the United States of America to remove the long-standing and unjustifiable economic and trade embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba, thereby enabling that country to enjoy all the legitimate prospects for its sustained development, which is long overdue.

In his address before a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 23 September 2010, His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi and Chairman of the African Union, stated categorically that sanctions have caused great economic hardship, especially for the poor and vulnerable in targeted countries, including Cuba. On behalf of the African Union, he challenged those concerned to promote social progress and better standards of life, as set forth in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. We in Africa believe that it is now time to give dialogue a chance and allow Cuba to continue to effectively contribute its fair share to global development, and the United States should lift its long-standing embargo.

The countries of Africa, like the majority of the countries and Member States of the United Nations, as can be seen from the voting trend over the years in the General Assembly, are of the view that it is high time that the embargo on the people of Cuba were lifted, considering that it has now been 50 years since it was imposed on the innocent people of that country. Children born after 1960, who are now men and women, have not known anything else except the embargo on this beautiful country that has so much potential and goodwill.

It is time for change. Now is the time. The African Group and the African Union have the confidence that President Obama's Administration can and should bring this change. Once again, the African Group, the African Union and indeed Malawi call for the immediate lifting of the embargo on beautiful Cuba.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which also aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Egypt, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we have done in the past, CARICOM member States continue to reiterate their unequivocal opposition to the United States imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has been opposed by the overwhelming majority of the international community for the past 18 consecutive years. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter. The embargo itself runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade, which this body traditionally champions.

The stubborn persistence of the embargo is apparently impervious to the sustained chorus of international criticism or to the logic of a world that has changed immeasurably over the past four and a half decades since the imposition of the blockade. The embargo has now outlived the Cold War by 19 years. It has outlasted the terms of eight Presidents of the United States and that of Cuban President Fidel Castro. Over 70 per cent of Cubans alive today were born under the embargo. CARICOM considers the embargo an anachronism that has succeeded only in contributing to the suffering of generations of ordinary Cubans and in unnecessarily increasing tensions between the United States and Cuba. It serves no justifiable legal, political or moral purpose in the twenty-first century.

The punitive embargo is of particular concern to CARICOM, which shares a history, culture and sisterhood with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State of the Caribbean region and an integral part of the pan Caribbean process. Caribbean ties with Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. The member States of CARICOM continue to maintain close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in areas including trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development. In many ways, our future regional development depends upon our collective advancement and progress. In that context, we view the embargo not just as a punitive act against Cuba but as an impediment to our shared regional development.

This year's report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 64/6 (A/65/83), like previous reports on this matter, outlines responses from an overwhelming majority of Member States that share a common perspective as to the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General demonstrates that the embargo even affects the manner in which organs and agencies of the United Nations system carry out their work in Cuba. CARICOM States therefore reaffirm the positions of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement in opposing such unilateral actions. We maintain the position that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations remain the only acceptable means for advancing long-term peace stability.

The annual resolution, which has been repeatedly adopted by the General Assembly, also constitutes a blot on the credibility and efficacy of the United Nations. There is probably no single issue on which the United Nations has made such sustained, strong and unambiguous pronouncements. Yet the embargo continues, in the face of overwhelming international reproach. CARICOM believes that the President of the General Assembly should explore additional mechanisms to operationalize the words of the resolution. The continued disregard for the will of the General Assembly will only complicate the President's stated goal of improving the role of the United Nations in matters of global governance.

The significance of the embargo on the Cuban economy continues to be of great concern to CARICOM. The humanitarian impact on the people of Cuba, especially in the area of health care and food, is especially saddening. The inability of Cuba to acquire necessary medical equipment, spare parts and the latest generation medications because of the embargo continues to affect the health-care system, where treatment remains free of charge to the Cuban people.

With the strengthening and more frequent storms and hurricanes wrought by climate change and Cuba's geographic susceptibility to these natural disasters, the unacceptable humanitarian impact of the embargo becomes even more acute. Additionally, construction materials and heavy equipment are becoming increasingly inaccessible to Cuba because of stringent rules regarding origin and restrictions against corporations based outside of the United States. The negative effects on the Cuban economy and its growth are obvious and tangible. The embargo has now cost Cuba almost $100 billion since it was imposed in 1962.

It is remarkable that, even as Cuba struggles with the recent unfortunate string of natural disasters and the continued impacts of the global economic crisis, it continues to assist other nations in the developing world, starting with its immediate Caribbean neighbours. Thousands of Caribbean students have attended Cuban universities without charge. Thousands have received free surgery and medical assistance in Cuba. And thousands more have been treated in their home countries by Cuban doctors and nurses. We have benefited from technical expertise, capacity-building programmes, infrastructure assistance and from the selfless generosity of the Cuban people. The people of Cuba have threatened no one, and neither the embargo nor its deleterious side effects has prevented them from continually extending a hand of friendship and solidarity, even across ideological divides.

Given Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance, it should not be isolated or excluded from participation in regional and hemispheric processes. CARICOM reiterates its unwavering support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination, in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development. We call once again for the end to an embargo that has preserved a state of tension between two neighbouring countries and generated concern, disquiet and discomfort throughout the Caribbean.

CARICOM States continue to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. Those two neighbours, a mere 90 miles apart, have produced great scholars, scientists and global leaders. The two countries possess proud and noble histories, and are populated by friendly, open and loving peoples. As such, in spite of a long history of dashed hopes, CARICOM continues to believe that a new beginning is possible in the relationship between the Governments of Cuba and the United States.

However, we consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite of any meaningful rapprochement between the two countries, not a negotiated end result. While there have been some recent positive indications of flexibility, there have also been reminders of unilateral rigidity.

We remain guardedly optimistic that the United States recent recommitment to multilateralism will result in an increased willingness to consider the opinions and concerns of its global friends and partners. On this issue, global opinion can hardly be conveyed in a more convincing or consistent manner. As such, our faith in the recent pronouncements of the United States Government carries with it an expectation that these few remaining historical and unilateral wrongs will be righted expeditiously.

It is within this context that CARICOM States unstintingly support the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba (A/65/L.3).

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and Venezuela, a State that is in the process of joining the bloc. The associated States of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I would like to express a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

MERCOSUR was founded on the principles of solidarity, interdependence and good-neighbourly relations. We believe that tolerance is the basis for the historic convergence in our continent of peoples from every corner of the world. We are joined with our Latin American neighbours by the desire to live in peace, promote mutual understanding, defend the independence, equality and sovereignty of States and promote respect for international law. These ideals have historically guided the relationship among Latin American States and societies and are enshrined in the charter of the Organization of American States.

In that regard, we have welcomed efforts and decisions taken last year, including the easing of travel restrictions, the removal of limits on remittances and the relaxation of conditions for sending packages. However, it is nevertheless unfortunate that further steps in that direction have not been applied recently, that the embargo against Cuba continues unchanged and that conditions are once again being placed along the path towards greater openness and direct dialogue.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the embargo against Cuba is contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that it contravenes the rules of international law, in particular in relation to the equality of States, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and the peaceful solution of conflicts. Moreover, the embargo is contrary to the principles of justice and human rights, for it punishes an entire innocent population for no apparent reason.

We reject on principle unilateral and extraterritorial measures that cause irreparable harm to the welfare of peoples and obstruct the process of regional integration.

We once again reaffirm our unequivocal support for the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.3). MERCOSUR and its associate States reiterate their commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate tool for resolving disputes and as an effective way to promote international cooperation and understanding among peoples.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is just another example of an outdated policy that does not belong in today's world. By adopting the draft resolution before us, the General Assembly will bear witness once again to its resolute political will in defence of the ideals of freedom, solidarity and respect for sovereignty and international law.

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): For 19 consecutive years, the Government of Mexico has come to this forum to reiterate its rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to reaffirm its opposition to the use of coercive actions that have no legal foundation in the United Nations Charter.

In 1992, the Government of the Republic of Cuba submitted a draft resolution for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly in order to put an end to the embargo imposed by the Government of the United States. Ever since, Mexico has come to this forum to reaffirm its long-standing position of principle that any kind of political, economic or military sanctions to be imposed on States can flow only from decisions or recommendations made by the General Assembly or the Security Council once they have determined that such actions are necessary in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law.

Mexico believes that unilateral measures applied in an extraterritorial fashion on third-party countries have severe humanitarian consequences, in open contradiction of the goals that supposedly drive them. Moreover, such measures also signal the abandonment of diplomacy and dialogue as appropriate ways of resolving disputes among States.

Multilateralism, respect for international law and for the rules and principles that regulate coexistence between nations, as well as respectful dialogue remain the best way to resolve disputes, guarantee peaceful coexistence among States and ensure an international climate of peace.

Various organs and entities of the United Nations system have noted the negative impact that the embargo has on Cuba's economic and social development, as evident in the economic, commercial and financial transactions that this country undertakes. They have also noted the damaging effects on sensitive areas that have a direct impact on the lives of Cuba's people, as well as the indirect repercussions on third-party countries owing to the impossibility of interacting with Cuba when it comes to many economic and social activities.

That is why Mexico has always supported all initiatives against the embargo and unilateral measures in various forums, at the United Nations and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as well as in others such as the Organization of American States, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, the Ibero American Summit and the Rio Group. We will continue to support Cuba's inclusion in global economic, commercial and financial dialogue and trade mechanisms in line with that country's own

desire and sovereign decisions, so as to foster cooperation and development.

The Government of Mexico bases its bilateral and multilateral relations on the overarching principles of international law that govern peaceful and civilized coexistence among sovereign States in the modern world. Those principles have preserved the same solidarity and continuity over time in the relations between Mexico and Cuba, two States that have maintained steadfast historical ties in an atmosphere of renewed trust and unfailingly following the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Based on what I have said here, Mexico reiterates that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America on Cuba must come to end, given that the embargo is based on a policy that, extended for almost half a century, has affected the people of Cuba in a silent, systematic and cumulative manner. Mexico believes that the observance of international law and the rules and principles governing coexistence among nations, as well as respectful dialogue irrespective of imbalances or differences, are necessary tools for overcoming differences between States and for ensuring a climate of international peace.

From our own experience we know that societies evolve and change according to their own circumstances, and not as the result of arbitrary or coercive measures imposed from outside. In the light of this, the Mexican Government again reiterates its firm commitment to contributing actively and decisively to the rule of international law as it pertains to this item on the General Assembly's agenda. We will support the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) that has been proposed at this session.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General submitted under this agenda item (A/65/83). The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 18 consecutive years, by an overwhelming majority, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions urging all countries, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, to repeal or invalidate all laws and measures with extraterritorial effect that compromise the sovereignty of other States, undermine the legitimate rights and interests of entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of those States and affect the freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, those resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba imposed by the country concerned is yet to be lifted. This constitutes a serious violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, adversely affects normal commercial and trade exchanges between Cuba and other countries and impedes the operations of the agencies of the United Nations system in Cuba. What is more, it also seriously undermines the Cuban people's rights to survival and development.

The information obtained from Governments and international organizations in the Secretary-General's report shows that over the past year the economic embargo against Cuba has remained substantially unchanged. It thus continues to inflict enormous economic and financial losses on Cuba, which immeasurably limit the Cuban people's efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic and social development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The international community is now faced with multiple serious challenges posed by the financial, food and energy crises, as well as climate change, making the embargo and sanctions against Cuba all the more unreasonable.

China pursues an independent and peaceful foreign policy, and is committed to developing friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. We are of the view that every sovereign State is entitled to independently choose its own suitable social system and path to development. No country has the right to unilaterally impose military, political, economic or other forms of sanctions on other countries. Experience shows that sanctions usually fail to achieve their expected results; on the contrary, they may end up victimizing civilians, in particular the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

In today's world, multilateralism and the democratization of international relations have taken root in people's hearts, while openness, cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win progress have become the consensus of the international community. When

disputes arise, dialogue on an equal footing, with friendly consultation, represents the best path to a settlement. The Chinese Government has always maintained that countries should develop their relations in compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

It is always our hope that in State-to-State relations, dialogue will replace confrontation, and engagement and exchange will replace embargoes and sanctions. The Chinese Government urges the country concerned to terminate its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible. In this connection, China will support the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) that has been submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela aligns itself with the statements made this morning by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the Southern Common Market. I would like, however, to raise the voice of my country at this historic moment.

During the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the overwhelming majority of Member States voted in favour of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has lasted a half century and seeks to limit the right of the Cuban people to decide their own destiny. Those countries forcefully call for respect of the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples and strongly condemn threats to the political independence of States, as inconsistent with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Will the imperialist Government of the United States continue to ignore the will of this Assembly, which has repeatedly condemned the blockade against our sister Republic of Cuba? In reaffirming its long-standing commitment to the values of humanism and solidarity among peoples, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rejects the aggression against the Cuban people, which undermines the peaceful coexistence of nations and international law.

The change of administration in the United States generated great expectations for a new policy that would respect the sovereignty of nations. There is nothing, however, that suggests that there have been substantial changes in the foreign policy of the United States, in particular with regard to the blockade against Cuba. The United States Government continues to ignore the voices of the peoples of the world, which demand the end of that genocidal policy as a violation of the most basic human rights.

It is noteworthy that the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts, which prevent Cuban trade with United States companies and their subsidiaries in third countries, continue to be in force. Through the extraterritorial application of United States legislation, the blockade affects the legitimate interests of any sovereign State that legitimately decides to become a business partner of the Republic of Cuba.

The devastating collateral damage inflicted each day on the brotherly people of the island by the blockade policy is unjustifiable. As noted by the American Association for World Health, the blockade would cause a massive humanitarian disaster in Cuba if that nation did not have an extraordinary public health system. The blockade against Cuba has diverse impacts on the daily lives of women and men, children and the elderly. It manifests itself harshly in the way it affects the quality of life of children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, who must do without the standard treatment for this disease. The blockade also makes it difficult for people to enjoy their housing rights. It hinders the import of building materials needed to replace and repair the huge number of buildings damaged by hurricanes. The blockade causes millions in losses each year in Cuba's basic industries, sugar, steelwork and tourism.

In short, the blockade represents a repeated and unilateral denial by a signatory to the United Nations Charter of the right to development of another Member State and its people, without the aggrieved State ever having committed aggression of any kind against the aggressor State. And what is the reason for the recurring hostility against the Cuban people? The answer was given by Ernesto Che Guevara on 9 April 1961, when he said that the heroic Cuban people had risen up against the "despotic rule of imperialism, which crushes national identity, insults patriotic feeling and colonizes the economy". The heroism of the Cuban people is, therefore, an example of the struggle for dignity and sovereignty of nations. The imperialists have not been able and will not be able to break that patriotic spirit.

Despite the criminal blockade, the Cuban Government and people have provided extraordinary support to the plans and programmes developed in Venezuela to achieve social justice. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to express its gratitude for that invaluable solidarity.

This is a special day at the United Nations. We are discussing an issue of cardinal importance to the peoples of the world. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly embraces the sovereignty, independence and dignity of nations, and therefore we strongly support the draft resolution presented by our sister Republic of Cuba (A/65/L.3), which again demands the suspension of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba.

Mr. Khazee (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran subscribes to the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China on the subject under consideration. We would also like to cordially welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba to this meeting. Many of the rights of nations and people are of an economic and social nature. Attempts to deprive people and countries of those rights infringe on their basic human rights and are therefore illegitimate. Indeed, that is the main feature of sanctions as we know them today.

Economic blockades and sanctions have to be viewed as illegitimate for at least the following reasons: First, there is no single case where certain Powers have not been behind economic sanctions against developing countries or territories. Sanctions have turned out to be a tool, not to spur international peace and security but to impose hegemonic intentions of big Powers against other countries and populations. Therefore, the imposition or prolongation of sanctions or their extension against any State under the pretext of securing international peace and security but with the real aim of achieving the political objectives of one or a few States is deplorable. Secondly, worst of all, sanctions always end up targeting the daily lives of ordinary people. They have a dramatic impact on rights recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For instance, they often cause significant disruption in the distribution of food, pharmaceuticals and sanitation supplies, jeopardize the quality of food and the availability of clean drinking water, severely interfere with the functioning of basic health and education systems, and undermine the right to work.

The victimization of innocent civilians in instances where sanctions have been imposed, including ostensibly legitimate ones, remains a matter of serious concern and dismay. There is ample evidence that sanctions, first and foremost, put the economic growth and prosperity of people in peril. They are simply misguidedly punitive. Thirdly, notwithstanding all the harm that sanctions cause, they have also proven to be futile. There is no strong proof that independent countries compromise their revered national interests and yield to the antagonistic wills of hegemonic Powers because of sanctions. Fourthly, the argument that sanctions are a better option than more forceful measures has also proven to be irrelevant. Certain Powers are not concerned about the consequences of punitive measures, nor do they conform in their actions to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. They make their cases independently of the concerns of the international community and tend to misuse the available means in the Charter to address their narrowly defined interests. Whenever they deem it necessary, they without fail resort to force, with or without first exercising sanctions or other non-violent measures and with or without United Nations approval. Sanctions will not stop them from exercising force, should they themselves find it desirable.

Yet, the most unjustifiable and deplorable form of sanctions is the imposition of unilateral blockades and extraterritorial application of domestic laws by one State, which happens, unsurprisingly, to be the United States of America. Such actions against others have an effect not only on the population under sanctions but also on the interests of the third parties, who are disproportionately and unreasonably being punished. Numerous international documents have asked for the swift invalidation of all such measures. This Hall has witnessed during the past 19 years the overwhelming support of the international community and countries — coming from every region and part of the world — to the call made through 18 resolutions so far to annul the inhumane and futile measures imposed against the Government and people of Cuba.

Indeed, one may wonder what more could be done to convince the United States to lift the economic blockade. What more could be said to argue that those illegal measures flagrantly violate the United Nations

Charter, the rule of international law, the multilateral trading system, the norms and principles governing relations among States, as well as the clear will of the international community? That will has been unequivocally expressed in so many resolutions adopted by this body.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has lasted for decades, serves no purpose other than to inflict tremendous hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children. The embargo has seriously jeopardized the legitimate rights and interests of Cuba and other States. The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of international law and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures continue to adversely affect the living conditions and human rights of the Cuban people and to hamper the efforts of the Cuban Government to achieve its development goals — in particular the eradication of poverty and hunger and the promotion of health and education — as indispensable means for achieving economic and social development.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly rejects and opposes the application of unilateral economic and trade measures imposed by one State against another, as well as the extraterritorial application and effects of national legislation on the sovereignty of other States. We oppose and condemn such measures and laws and their continued application. We will do everything to effectively thwart them and urge other States to do likewise by refraining from recognizing, adopting or implementing extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures and arbitrary travel restrictions that seek to exert pressure on other countries — threatening their sovereignty and independence and their freedom of trade and investment and preventing them from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will.

The Islamic Republic of Iran shares the concerns of the Cuban people and Government and therefore emphasizes the urgent need to put an end to such measures against Cuba and other developing countries and calls for the full implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

In conclusion, sanctions, whoever imposes them under whatever pretext or disguise, continue to be illegitimate, futile and misguidedly punitive.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): Algeria aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would also like to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Algeria would like to reiterate that it is deeply concerned by the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed against Cuba by the United States of America for nearly half a century. The consecutive annual adoption by almost all members of the General Assembly of a resolution, virtually the same each year, calling for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba reflects the profound will of the international community to put an end to that situation, which has lasted far too long.

In accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, Algeria has always condemned the imposition of extraterritorial applications of laws and all forms of coercive economic and trade measures, such as the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which contradicts international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Every Member State should respect the principles of the Charter, including, in particular, the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of any other State.

It is a fact that that blockade is causing huge material loss and economic damage to Cuba. It is also negatively affecting the well-being of the Cuban people on a daily basis. Those consequences are exacerbated by the adverse effects of the current global economic and financial crisis, which have seriously compromised Cuba's development efforts, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83), based on information provided by 134 Governments and 25 organs and agencies of the United Nations system, on the implementation of resolution 64/6.

It is important to recall the long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue, confirmed again at the fifteenth summit, which rejected the use of

economic measures of coercion and extraterritorial applications of law imposed on developing countries. The heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement also urged the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, in strict compliance with the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on that issue, adopted annually since 1992.

Therefore, it is with conviction that Algeria will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted, A/65/L.3, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): For almost 50 years, the people of Cuba have suffered as a result of the economic, commercial and financial blockade by the United States of America, which is a major hindrance to the development of Cuba. That blockade constitutes a violation of international law, and its imposition shows disregard for the noble and abiding principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The international community has consistently opposed the embargo against Cuba. The unity with which the international community reacted to that embargo when it condemned it with a record vote of 187 to 3 in 2009 is testimony to the outright rejection of that unilateral act, which has gone on for far too long and must come to an end.

In that regard, South Africa supports the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.3), entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We do so because that relentless and unilateral action has caused untold suffering to the people of Cuba.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Malawi on behalf of the African Group. We also wish to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and, through him, our fraternal greetings to the loving people of Cuba.

For South Africa and its people, together with our entire region, we continue to be humbled by the historic role that Cuba played in our liberation and freedom. True to their commitment to international solidarity, justice, freedom and equality, the people of Cuba did not stand by as spectators when others were oppressed. For that reason, we owe it to Cuba and its people to join the progressive forces of the world and unequivocally condemn the continued illegal embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

South Africa has repeatedly joined the majority of countries in expressing its disagreement with and opposition to the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. In so doing, South Africa has been guided by the basic norms of international law and conduct in its principled support for the need to eliminate punitive economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion. South Africa views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as a violation of the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

In spite of that embargo, the Cuban people have extended a hand of friendship and solidarity to other people around the world. Cuba's outstanding work in the areas of health, education and biotechnology in the developing world, particularly in Africa, is recognized by the international community. South Africa and Cuba have maintained long-standing cordial relations, which continue to expand through increased cooperation on a wide range of issues, including economic, commercial and financial collaboration. The South Africa-Cuba Joint Consultative Mechanism and the South Africa-Cuba Joint Bilateral Commission continue to serve as strategic platforms for the expression of our strong bilateral relations.

We all, without exception, acknowledged the hardship that we and our respective peoples have faced after the onset of the financial crisis, which to date continues to endure. The extremely harsh global financial and economic crisis, as well as the embargo, only worsen the fate of the Cuban people and stifle the outstanding contribution by Cuba to the economic and social development of the poor. The international community should, therefore, take meaningful steps to free the Cuban people from the devastating effects of the embargo.

South Africa calls on the United States to end its unilateral isolation of Cuba. We urge the United States to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Cuba. We further call for accelerated action to dismantle the unjust sanctions regime against Cuba. Our collective

message should, therefore, be loud and clear to the United States, namely, that it should end its embargo and sanctions.

South Africa reiterates its support for the draft resolution before us today, and calls on all States to refrain from recognizing the unilateral coercive measures and laws that defy the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): In contributing to the debate on agenda item 41 concerning the necessity of ending the embargo imposed against Cuba since 1961, the delegation of Indonesia wishes to associate itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China delivered earlier by the representative of Yemen and with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the representative of Egypt.

Yet again, the General Assembly has been convened to consider the impact of the 50 year economic, commercial and financial embargo that was unilaterally imposed on Cuba during the long Cold War of the twentieth century. Although unilaterally imposed, the embargo has also impacted the economic and commercial relations of third countries. Much has changed since the initial imposition of the embargo. The world of 2010 is very different from that of 1961. Even with the impact of recent crises on the global economy, nations have opted to work together to overcome the difficulties created by those crises. That testifies to the fact that globalization has created the conditions for true global solidarity and partnership among nations. The embargo against Cuba runs contrary to that spirit of unity and solidarity, which is taking root in the world today.

Viewed from the perspective of the United Nations Charter and international law, the embargo lacks fairness and respect for the equality that should exist among and between sovereign States. The Charter is clear on the need for nations to develop friendly relations among themselves. It is equally emphatic about the need for nations to refrain from actions that will threaten the political independence of others or lead to intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a particular State.

The embargo infringes on those principles. It has a sharp political edge, which undermines relations between the main parties. Instead of a dialogue to resolve differences, what we have is an unwanted stand-off that does not allow for an exchange of views to normalize relations. Not only does the embargo give rise to political complications, but the economic, commercial and financial hardships that it causes can hardly be justified on any humanitarian ground. It is a great burden for any developing country, whose people would benefit so much more from cooperation than from confrontation.

Indonesia remains steadfast in its opposition to the embargo imposed unilaterally against Cuba. While it is true that some small meaningful changes in the embargo have occurred in recent times, such as the easing of travel restrictions to Cuba and the removal of obstacles to the transfer of remittances, the preferred resolution to the dispute is certainly for the embargo to be lifted completely. The time is ripe for relations between the two main parties to be transformed through constructive engagement.

Lifting the embargo would also be in keeping with the spirit of the times. It would demonstrate unambiguously respect for the principle of non-intervention, as embodied in the United Nations Charter and international law. Cuba would then be able to exercise its right to develop, unhindered by restrictions to its trade and other business activities. The tensions that now exist between the two nations would also dissolve.

It is Indonesia's hope that in the near future we will see a thawing of the frosty relations that now keep those two important neighbouring States apart. We believe that it is time for peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I take the floor to speak on agenda item 41, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". My delegation begins first of all by associating this statement with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77.

For the last 19 years, resolutions on lifting the 51-year embargo on Cuba have come before this Assembly. Likewise, the international community annually pronounces on the resolution, calling for the lifting of the embargo. The embargo continues to be cloaked in such an ideological suit that opportunities to relax and bring about its lifting continue to elude us.

It is even sadder that that is happening between geographical neighbours. We continue to witness Cuba trying to adapt to the challenge of living under trying

circumstances without asking for a lighter burden. We continue to be deeply touched by that, as new generations born into the embargo take on the responsibility before them with a common sense of purpose. That testifies to a committed population, with a host of approaches aimed at cutting up the huge challenge into bits and pieces and managing those challenges within their own means.

My delegation hopes that the principle of good-neighbourliness will win the day and that the people of our partner country, the United States, will restore, renew, revive, reclaim and redeem friendship and respect for Cuba's sovereignty within the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

At the end of the day, it is people who remain at the centre of the Charter of the United Nations, which begins with the words "We the peoples". We members of the United Nations must continue to give humanity a chance. We must continue to do what is necessary in the name of peace and security and in the preservation of the rights of the Cuban people to development. The imposition of the embargo is stuck in time, and we must not leave it to time or chance to see change. Rather, it is up to us, the Member States, to effect that change by calling for the lifting of the blockade. Our action on that noble request is also a declaration of our character, our wish to reach out to all.

Therefore, Solomon Islands closes by calling for the unconditional lifting of the blockade against the Cuban people and replacing it with genuine dialogue and cooperation. In the spirit of friendship and outreach to all, we call for carrying out that humble request in the name of humanity.

Mr. Raja (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report on the agenda item under consideration today (A/65/83).

This is the nineteenth year in succession that this Assembly has been deliberating the almost five-decade-old economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. In all those years, this Assembly has repeatedly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, which hurt the progress and prosperity of the people the world over.

The General Assembly has also called upon all States to respect their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law and to repeal and invalidate laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States and affect the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and on the freedom of trade and navigation. Despite the repeated calls of the General Assembly, its resolutions remain unimplemented, in contravention of world opinion. Such callous disregard of the will of the United Nations undermines the credibility of this body and weakens multilateralism.

Meanwhile, more importantly, the Cuban people continue to face the hardships induced by the embargo in their daily lives. The embargo and its extraterritorial aspects continue to remain in full force. In particular, domestic United States laws, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, have enhanced the extraterritorial reach of the embargo, encompassing foreign companies and foreign subsidiaries of United States companies doing business with Cuba or Cuban entities.

The embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, is adversely affecting the lives of the Cuban people and their efforts to move forward with the socio economic development of their country. The embargo has denied Cuba access to United States markets, investment, technology, financial services and scientific, educational, cultural and sports institutions. In the past five decades, Cuba has had to pay enormous extra costs to obtain products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometres away. The extraterritorial application of the United States embargo has discouraged investment, technology and its transfer and sale, and other forms of business collaboration between Cuba and third countries.

Health care, one of the commitments of the Millennium Development Goals, is particularly affected owing to the continuous denial of critical medical equipment, medicines, technologies and diagnostic aids to Cuban hospitals. Cuba's efforts to provide health assistance to fellow developing countries as part of South-South cooperation has also suffered from the embargo, making that yet another

unexpected negative extraterritorial impact of the embargo.

In the report of the Secretary-General, various United Nations entities have detailed the impact of the embargo and its extraterritorial effects. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Havana has noted the high cost and negative impact of the embargo on humanitarian and development cooperation implemented by the United Nations system in Cuba. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has stated that the embargo considerably affects the standard of living of Cuban citizens and may threaten Cuba's food security in the future.

The United Nations Development Programme has noted that the effects of the embargo can be observed in all spheres of Cuba's social and economic activities, including the lives of the most vulnerable. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has stated that the impact on trade of the extraterritorial application is considerable owing to significant United States interests in transnational corporations. In recent years, the financial, food and energy crises have made the impact of the embargo even more acute.

Geography indicates that there ought to be normal relations in trade and investment between Cuba and the United States of America. Despite the embargo, the United States continues to be a major source of food imports for Cuba, insofar as permitted by the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. That only confirms the high potential for trade, commerce and investment between those countries.

People-to-people contact between the two countries remains severely curtailed. The lifting of United States travel restrictions on Cuba would bring immense benefits to the Cuban tourism sector and to its people. Congressional efforts in the United States to relax or lift the embargo and the substantial interest in United States business circles for unhindered access to the Cuban market lend further credence to the annual United Nations resolutions calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba.

Before concluding, permit me to reiterate India's opposition to unilateral measures by countries that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of a country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations.

India joins all other nations in calling for an immediate end to the United States embargo against Cuba. India supports the draft resolution moved by Cuba today (A/65/L.3).

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation welcomes the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, at today's discussion. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the issue before us (A/65/83). The opinions of the Member States presented in the document clearly show their disagreement with and objections to the introduction of the unilateral and exterritorial economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Russia's position of principle with respect to the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) is well known. Our country fully shares the view of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the international community in firmly rejecting the United States embargo against Cuba and in calling for its lifting as soon as possible. We are convinced that ending the embargo against Cuba and normalizing United States-Cuban relations would generally help to improve the island's situation. We believe that the maintenance of the commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States is counterproductive, anachronistic and not in keeping with current realities.

Last year, President Obama's Administration took steps to lift a number of restrictions on visits to Cuba by United States citizens who have relatives there and on monetary and postal transfers to Cubans from the United States, as well as steps to resume dialogue on migration issues. We therefore expect other actions that will improve relations between the two countries and, ultimately of course, put a complete end to the long obsolete commercial and economic embargo against Cuba.

For the time being, we feel that we must continue our policy of voting in favour of the draft resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo, guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures or interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): Zambia will vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, as we have done in the past and for the reasons listed in the statements by the representatives of Malawi on behalf of the African Group, of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, with which we would like to be associated.

On 12 June 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a statement that has remained indelibly etched in the history of the Cold War era. Addressing himself to the President of the Soviet Union, he said "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall", in reference to the Berlin Wall. Today, for the sake of the suffering people of Cuba, including women and children, we wish to make an earnest and simple appeal: President Obama, please do the right thing and lift the United States embargo against Cuba. It is time to be on the right side of history.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia): The Gambia wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representatives of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, my delegation joined members of the Assembly in calling for an immediate end to one of the most protracted political sanctions regime that the Assembly has ever known. We spoke in the hope that the opportunity had finally arrived for the embargo to become a thing of the past. To our bewilderment, the half-century-old regime is still intact, with occasional cosmetic tweaks made to resemble real change. Real change is long overdue.

At this year's general debate, the Gambia's Foreign Minister said:

> "The United States embargo against Cuba is one of the longest running political disputes that this Assembly has needed to address for almost two decades. It is embarrassing that such a cruel and outmoded form of settling scores in international relations is still in place. The embargo has no legitimacy or appeal, and it is time for those that imposed it to show genuine leadership by ending it." (*A/65/PV.20*)

In the coming months, we will look forward to the exercise of true leadership towards ending that penal regime.

The devastating effects of the embargo on the Government and people of Cuba are amply documented in the Secretary-General's report in document A/65/83. It is also clear that the United Nations system, too, is paying a heavy price in its activities with Cuba, especially when it comes to the travel of Cuban United Nations personnel, visa restrictions and higher procurement costs directly associated with the embargo.

Cuban agriculture is not spared. Cuban health care, medical and scientific research, educational cooperation, cultural exchanges and intellectual property rights are all adversely affected by the extraterritorial reach of the embargo.

Cuban companies, United States companies and third-country companies continue to be penalized for doing business in Cuba. Travel to Cuba continues to be restricted in ways that make the cost prohibitive because of cumbersome procedures that visitors are required to meet. Financial transactions between Cuba and other countries have also not been spared. The odious nature of that embargo is apparent to all. Its continuation therefore cannot serve any useful purpose.

Even children are not spared by the embargo. The Secretary-General's report highlights the hurdles encountered by United Nations agencies in the procurement of Ritonavir, a paediatric antiretroviral drug. It states that the HIV/AIDS programme has also been affected by the lack of procurement of the antiretroviral drugs used in children, Kaletra and Norvir, both produced by Abbott, which is a United States-based company.

The Cuba we know does not deserve those sanctions. It is a leader in humanitarian assistance around the world and in providing health care and education to millions all over the world. The Cuba we know is not a threat to any country's national security. The Cuba we know is a country that promotes friendly relations among its peoples and the countries of every region represented in this Assembly.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Government and people of the Gambia will today stand in solidarity with Cuba by voting for draft resolution A/65/L.3. It is once again our hope that those who impose and maintain that inhumane embargo will find it in their hearts to call for its total and unconditional lifting. It is time to consign the Helms-Burton Act and the Torricelli Act to the dustbin of history. A regime of

friendly relations and good-neighbourliness should finally replace them in the birth of a new era of Cuban-American relations. We call on other countries to support the draft resolution and to further support efforts to dismantle that intricate web of extraterritorial sanctions.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana welcomes the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered today by the representatives of Yemen, Egypt and Malawi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the African Group, respectively.

As in the past, Ghana has asked for the floor to join other speakers in expressing its concern at the continued imposition and implementation of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States. Last year, members of the Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of resolution 64/6, calling for an end to this blockade. The strong solidarity demonstrated year after year in the Assembly speaks for itself — those restrictions against a Member State by a Member State should end.

In fulfilment of Ghana's commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in international law, we have steadfastly refrained from promulgating and enforcing laws whose extraterritorial effects adversely affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and their freedom of trade and navigation. Indeed, Ghana and Cuba enjoy excellent bilateral relations, based on our shared goals and responsibilities towards an equitable world in the spirit of cooperation and multilateralism.

Our long-standing cooperation with Cuba in the areas of health, education and sports continues to expand, and currently there are more than 200 Cuban medical professionals working in hospitals across Ghana and also teaching in some of our universities. Cuba continues to offer scholarships to Ghanaian students to study in Cuba in sectors that are deemed critical to the development agenda pursued by the Government of Ghana.

The embargo, in place for more than a half century, has taken its toll on the well-being of the ordinary people of Cuba, women and children. They are counting on the support of the rest of the world for an end to the embargo, which has had a debilitating effect on their lives. Ghana has chosen to offer that support today in the spirit of fellow feeling for our brothers and sisters in Cuba, and urges the United States to end its embargo.

Mr. Goddard (Barbados): Barbados wishes to associate itself with the statements by the representatives by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter call for respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, the right of peoples to self-determination, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations among States. The maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful coexistence of States require that all Member States adhere to the rule of law, including the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

For those reasons, Barbados opposes the imposition of unilateral punitive measures, especially where they involve the extraterritorial application of legislation that violates international law and restricts freedom of trade and navigation and the sovereignty and freedom of States. Barbados views the continued imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against the Republic of Cuba as a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Government of Barbados fully embraces Cuba as an important partner in the Caribbean region and remains committed to a policy of constructive engagement with its Government and people. We fully respect its sovereign rights and support its full integration into the hemisphere. We do not believe that efforts to isolate Cuba or measures that create greater hardship for the Cuban people, such as the decades-long economic embargo, will foster change in that country.

The embargo inhibits the development of normal economic and cultural relations. It distorts trade and investment flows and impedes legitimate business opportunities among neighbouring States. Furthermore, as the response of the United Nations Development Programme in the report of the Secretary-General states:

> "The impact of the embargo can be observed in all spheres of the country's social and economic activities, affecting opportunities for national and local development and creating economic hardship." (*A/65/83, p. 121*)

Barbados maintains excellent relations both with the United States of America and with Cuba and places great value on its long-established and friendly relations with both countries. In that spirit, we join the international community in calling for an immediate end to the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba and its people. We further urge the Government of the United States of America to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Cuba aimed at normalizing relations with Cuba. Such a step would remove a source of tension and conflict and would improve the prospects for peace, development and cooperation within our region.

In support of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, as in previous years, Barbados will vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) before us today.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.3.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Serious and imminent dangers threaten the existence of our species. To preserve human life, we must preserve peace. The use of only a small part of the world's enormous nuclear arsenal would mean the end of the species. The only guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used by any State or any individual is their destruction, along with the generation of conventional weapons of an almost similar lethal power developed of late.

The only solution is disarmament. To survive, a leap in humanity's awareness is crucial. That is possible only through the dissemination of truthful information on such issues, which most politicians conceal or ignore, which the press do not publish and which for the people are so horrendous that they seem unbelievable.

We are in a new era, and in our opinion, it is for this General Assembly of the United Nations to lead, with utmost urgency — and as Fidel Castro ceaselessly asks — a world mobilization to demand respect for the right of human beings and of peoples to live. Let us build a different world order. Let us institute a common ethic based on human solidarity and justice. Let us find a solution to conflicts through dialogue and cooperation. Let selfishness and plundering, which lead to war and the use of force, cease. In the face of the serious threat, let us put aside that which confronts us or divides us and let us unite to save peace, the planet and the life of future generations.

Under those circumstances in particular, the United States policy against Cuba does not have any ethical or legal basis, credibility or support. That is demonstrated by the more than 180 votes in the Assembly, which in recent years have called for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade. In the Secretary-General's report made available to us (A/65/83), more than 180 countries and agencies of the United Nations system document their opposition to that policy.

The rejection by Latin America and the Caribbean is forceful and unanimous. The Unity Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cancún in February 2010, stated that resolutely. The leaders of the region have conveyed that directly to the current American President. It is clear that the express rejection of the blockade and the Helms-Burton Act characterizes, as few items do, the political heritage of the region.

Equally unequivocal views have been endorsed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Ibero American summits, the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean summits, the African Union, the summits of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and virtually any group of nations that has declared its adherence to international law and to observance of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

There is broad and growing consensus in American society and the Cuban emigrants in that country against the blockade and in favour of a change of policy towards Cuba. Recent polls show that 71 per cent of United States citizens advocate the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States, while 64 per cent of them and a similar proportion of Cuban residents in south Florida oppose the Cuba travel ban, which violates their citizens' rights.

As with other issues, two years after the United States President announced a new beginning with Cuba, the facts confirm that nothing has changed. The President has not used his extensive privileges to relax the blockade. The sanctions against Cuba remain intact and are strictly implemented.

The economic siege was tightened in 2010, and its daily impact continues to be seen in all aspects of life in Cuba. Its consequences are particularly serious in areas that are sensitive for the population, such as health and food. Cuban ophthalmologic services cannot perform transpupillary thermotherapy, which is done through a surgical microscope, to treat children suffering from retinoblastoma, that is, cancer of the retina. It is impossible to obtain the equipment for that treatment, which can only be bought from the American company Iris Medical Instruments. Without that technology, it is impossible to treat a retina tumour and to save a child's affected eye.

Cuban children have no access to a medicine called Sevofluorane, the most advanced general inhalation anaesthetic agent, that is, an anaesthetic to operate on children, because its manufacturer, the American company Abbott, is not allowed to sell to Cuba. Nor can an optical coherence tomographer be obtained from the German company Carl Zeiss to examine the retina and the optical nerve because it has components supplied by the American company Humphrey.

The prevailing onerous and discriminatory conditions for purchases of American foodstuffs — which are supposedly protected as a humanitarian exception, while all international trade standards are violated — resulted in the dramatic reduction of those operations in the past year. That reality harms not only our people, but also American farmers.

It would be untruthful for anyone in this Hall to again describe as a trading partner a country to which Cuba cannot sell a single dose of medicine or a single gram of nickel.

Although Washington has very selectively authorized some cultural, academic and scientific exchanges, they are still subject to severe restrictions, and many such projects could not be carried out because licences, visas and other permits were denied. It is not widely known that Cuban artists are prohibited from receiving payment for their performances in this country.

Persecution with regard to Cuban property and assets and commercial and financial transfers to and from Cuba or those involving institutions or individuals based in our country has intensified. In the past year, Treasury and Justice Departments fines on firms of their country and Europe for transactions with Cuba, among other States, total more than $800 million. In a clear escalation, the American Government has also appropriated transfers in currencies of third countries, such as the euro. The confiscation of a transfer of more than €107,000 belonging to the company Cubana de Aviación, which was made through the Banco Popular Español from Madrid to Moscow, was true theft.

The direct economic damage caused to the Cuban people by the implementation of the blockade in the past 50 years exceeds $751 billion dollars at that currency's current value.

Despite universal rejection of that policy, high officials of that Government have reiterated that it will remain unchanged. On 2 September, President Obama himself ratified the sanctions against Cuba, referring to the alleged national interest of the United States. However, everyone knows that the White House continues to pay more attention to the well-funded special interests of a tiny minority that has made the policy against Cuba a very profitable business.

It is clear that the United States has no intention whatsoever of lifting the blockade. There is no sign that the Government has any will to dismantle the most irrational aspects of what is already the most comprehensive and long-lasting set of sanctions and coercive economic measures ever applied against any country. Traditionally, whenever the pretexts brandished as alleged obstacles to lifting the blockade against Cuba collapse, new excuses replace them in order to justify the continuation of a policy that is unsustainable from every viewpoint.

According to several news agencies, very recently, on 19 October, President Obama described all the practices that, in his view, are currently taking place in Cuba as insufficient and made any new step conditional on internal changes that they would like to see in our country. The President is wrong to assume that he has the right to interfere and to rate processes taking place in Cuba today. It is regrettable that he is so misinformed and ill advised.

The transformations that we Cubans are embarking on today are in tune with our aspirations and the sovereign decisions of our people. They seek to update our economic model and make it efficient, to improve our society, extend our culture and develop our socialism. Those changes do not seek to appease the desires or satisfy the interests of the United States Government, which have always been contrary to those of the Cuban people. For the super-Power, any process that does not lead to the establishment of a regime subordinated to its interest will be inadequate. But that is not going to happen, because many generations of Cubans have dedicated and continue to dedicate the best of their lives to defending the sovereignty and independence of Cuba.

The United States Government has also ignored the many declarations and proposals submitted by the Cuban Government — both in public and in private — that bear witness to our willingness to establish a serious and constructive dialogue under conditions of equality and with full respect for our independence.

No response has been given to the new cooperation projects proposed by the Cuban Government in the course of the year 2010, aimed at making progress in areas of common interest such as the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural disasters, including addressing possible accidents that may result from oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. An opportunity to advance in areas of mutual benefit to our peoples has, once again, been missed. On the contrary, the United States Government has continued its arbitrary practices of adding Cuba's name to spurious lists, including those of States that allegedly sponsor international terrorism, produced by the State Department to classify the behaviour of other nations. That country does not have the moral authority to draft such lists; as a rule, its name should appear at the top of them all. There is no reason whatsoever to include Cuba on any of those lists.

The United States Government likewise has upheld the unjust conviction against the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters who have been imprisoned for more than 12 years and whose cause has inspired broad solidarity within the international community. Cuba, which has been and is still a victim of State terrorism, calls for that Government to put an end to the double standards and impunity enjoyed in its own territory by the confessed perpetrators of acts of terrorism that were organized as part of the anti-Cuban policy of that country, which was conceived to destabilize our country during the 1960s and which included sabotage, kidnapping, assassination and armed aggressions. That would be a genuine contribution to the international struggle against the scourge of terrorism.

It is both outrageous and abnormal that the policy of sanctions and subversion applied by the United States against Cuba continues to be guided by the thinking contained in the memorandum by the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Lester Mallory, written on 6 April 1960, which was declassified a few years ago. I quote:

> "The majority of Cubans support Castro [...] There is no effective political opposition [...] The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support [from the Government] is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship.
>
> Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life [...] denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

This quote reveals a cruel and aggressive policy, absolutely contrary to international law, that this Government insists on maintaining, knowing that it causes harm and suffering and violates the human rights of an entire people.

This is not a bilateral issue, as is constantly repeated by representatives of the United States. Its distinct extraterritorial character is endorsed by laws, and there are many examples of the implementation of coercive measures against citizens and entities from third countries.

The blockade, given its nature and scope, qualifies as an act of genocide under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948, and also as an act of economic warfare, in accordance with the Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War, adopted in 1909. It is a hostile and unilateral act that should be ceased unilaterally.

Once again, on behalf of the people of Cuba, I ask the representatives of all the countries gathered here to vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, which I am honoured to present, entitled "Necessity of

ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

We Cubans feel proud of our work. Although this economic warfare causes hardships, the fact that has not taken a toll on human lives or managed to cause widespread and traumatic harm to our people is thanks to the efforts and sacrifices made by Cubans and the willingness and determination of its Government.

Although the economic persecution constitutes the main obstacle hindering the development of our country and the improvement of the living standards of our people, Cuba shows undeniable results in the eradication of poverty and hunger; in health and education indices, which serve as a global point of reference; the promotion of gender equality; the freedom and equal well-being of Cubans; social consensus; the democratic participation of citizens in the country's decisions; the reversal of environmental degradation and the development of international cooperation with about 100 countries of the third world.

A few weeks ago Cuba was able to declare in this Hall that it had largely and exceptionally complied with the Millennium Development Goals. Such results are still a utopia for a large segment of the population on this planet.

We Cubans face our historical destiny with optimism, commitment and creativity. We are inspired by the feelings of peace, justice and solidarity that have characterized our people and the friendship that the whole world feels for our free and rebellious island. Cuba will continue to be ready to enter into peaceful and respectful relations with the United States, as it has with the overwhelming majority of the international community and the entire hemisphere.

Cuba will never cease to denounce the blockade or to demand its people's legitimate right to live and work for its socio economic development under conditions of equality, in cooperation with the rest of the nations and without economic siege or external pressures.

Cuba expresses its gratitude to the international community for its firm solidarity with our people, convinced that, someday, justice will be served and that this draft resolution will then no longer be necessary.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.3.

In that connection, I have two requests to speak in explanation of vote before the vote. Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Godard (United States of America): The United States of America, like most Member States, is firmly committed to supporting the desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their country's future.

The United States of America, like all Member States, has the sovereign right to conduct its economic relationships with other countries as it sees fit. The United States economic relationship with Cuba is a bilateral issue and part of a broader set of relations meant to encourage a more open environment in Cuba and increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Respect for those rights and freedoms are part of this Organization's core values. We should not lose sight of that in a debate mired in the rhetorical arguments of the past and focused on tactical differences — a debate that does nothing to help the Cuban people.

My delegation regrets that the delegation from Cuba continues, year after year, to inappropriately and incorrectly label United States trade restrictions on Cuba as an act of genocide. Such an egregious misuse of the term diminishes the real suffering of victims of genocide elsewhere in the world. Additionally, those who charge the United States sanctions as being the cause of deprivation among the Cuban people should be reminded that the United States holds no restriction on humanitarian aid to Cuba and remains Cuba's largest provider of food.

The United States sold $533 million in agricultural products, medical devices, medicine and wood to Cuba in 2009. In agricultural products alone, the United States exported $526 million in goods to Cuba. Once again, in 2009, Cuba reported that the United States was its fifth largest trading partner. The United States in 2009 also authorized $237 million in private humanitarian assistance in the form of gift parcels filled with food and other basic necessities,

non-agricultural humanitarian donations and medical donations.

It is equally important to note that the United States has demonstrated that we are prepared to engage the Government of Cuba on issues that affect the security and well-being of both our peoples. In April 2009, President Obama stated that the United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba, but there is a longer journey that must be travelled to overcome the decades of mistrust. Over the past 21 months, the United States has begun to make progress on the vision that the President has outlined. We lifted restrictions on family visits and remittances and expanded the amounts of humanitarian items that the American people can donate to individuals in Cuba. The United States has enhanced the ability of United States telecommunication companies to pursue agreements to provide service to Cuba and has made it easier for United States agricultural producers to pursue contracts with Cuban buyers. Furthermore, we have resumed bilateral discussions on migration, we have initiated talks to re establish direct mail service between the United States and Cuba, and we have increased artistic and cultural exchanges between our countries, consistent with our long-standing support for freedom of expression. In the wake of the tragic earthquake in Haiti, the United States coordinated with Cuba to address the medical needs of Haitians as part of the international relief efforts there.

President Obama has stated publicly that the release of political prisoners and economic reforms are positive steps for the Cuban people. The United States hopes to see the fulfilment of those promises soon, as well as a broader opening by the Cuban Government signalling its willingness to engage constructively with its own people. However, it is the view of the United States that a new era in United States-Cuban relations cannot be fully realized until the Cuban people enjoy the internationally recognized political and economic freedoms that this body has done so much to defend in other countries around the world.

My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/65/L.3. Indeed, the United States believes that it is high time for this body to focus its energies on supporting the Cuban people in their quest to freely decide their own future and move beyond the rhetorical posturing that this draft resolution represents.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua will explain why it is going to vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, presented by comrade Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, whom we thank for having updated the General Assembly on the harm and damage that President Barack Obama's Administration continues to inflict on the people of Cuba with the most criminal blockade that has existed in the history of humankind.

Before I do that, I wish to express our eternal gratitude to the people and Government of Cuba for their unconditional solidarity and for their most recent noble initiative of solidarity that was carried out in my country, Nicaragua. The President of our country has just awarded the Rubén Darío order of cultural independence to the Todos con Voz Cuban medical brigade, which completed the historic mission of diagnosing and recording all Nicaraguan brothers and sisters with disabilities throughout our national territory. I quote the words of Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua, when he made the award:

> "To the Todos con Voz medical brigade, exemplary exponents of the model of scientific development and public health, humanism and solidarity of Fidel and Raúl's Cuba, recognized as one of the best in the world and the pride of all the world's revolutionaries."

The people and Governments represented here think of Cuba as a kindred island, people and Government, and recognize Cuba for its heroism, solidarity, humanism, generosity and devotion when faced with other people's suffering, for its readiness to lend a friendly hand when we need help. That is why we will once again today express ourselves to demand that the country that blockades Cuba, prevents its development and threatens those that go near it — the country which from the very first day of the Cuban revolution initiated aggression against it — cease this absurd and inhuman policy.

We meet once again today in the General Assembly to bring together the voices of the international community and to demand, for the nineteenth consecutive time, that the Government of the United States put an end to this criminal and inhuman blockade against the heroic generous people and Government of Cuba.

Any country would understand this, simply from reading the Secretary-General's report (A/65/83) on the replies of Governments and bodies of the United Nations system. All but one of us understands. Once again, the Government of the United States will be isolated in the international community. Once again, the world will stand by Cuba and its people in defence of its sovereignty and its unstoppable revolution and in demanding an end to the inhuman blockade. Latin America and the Caribbean defend Cuba with a single voice. We have closed ranks with Cuba so that the Government of the United States will reconsider and correct its historical error, which is an anachronism in our region.

Not only does the United States continue to ignore the will of the General Assembly; it has tightened the main elements of the embargo against Cuba. That is reflected in the increase in economic sanctions and the targeting of Cuban business activity and financial transactions. We can see how the chokehold policy on Cuba is being carried out to the letter by the new Obama Administration, just as previous Administrations have done. Where is the change of which so much mention was made during the campaign? There has been no change at all. This Administration is increasingly isolated in its obstinate imperial policy.

We have just heard the words of our colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, representing his worthy people and Government. He has again told us that the blockade continues to be the major obstacle to the economic and social development of his country, and that its full effects on the Cuban economy is approximately $751,363,000,000.

In addition to its criminal blockade, the United States continues its policy of State terrorism by supporting admitted terrorists who freely move through the cities of the United States, planning and carrying out terrorist actions against the people and the Government of Cuba. At the same time, the United States is assailing freedom and human rights by insisting on keeping in its jails five heroic Cuban patriots whose only crime was to defend their motherland from terrorists acts committed from the territory of the United States of America. We demand the immediate release of these five Cuban anti terrorist heroes. To them and their families we express our respect and admiration on their heroic struggle against terrorists who try to destroy Cuba and its unstoppable socialist revolution.

With our vote, we shall once again express our emphatic condemnation of the blockade against Cuba and of all coercive measures of a unilateral nature and with extraterritorial impact that contradict international law and the accepted norms of free trade. Such practices pose a grave threat to multilateralism. We will also be condemning the use of coercive unilateral measures, such as illegal sanctions against developing countries aimed at preventing them from exercising their right to determine their own political, economic and social systems.

Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3. We call on the community of nations to once again stand by Cuba by voting in favour, thereby sending a message of peace, solidarity, respect for the Charter of the Organization and for non-interference and non-intervention and, of course, for an immediate and unilateral halt to the cruel and inhuman blockade.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.3. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau

Draft resolution A/65/L.3 was adopted by 187 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 65/6).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The European Union believes that the United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, American legislation such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 has extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. As a matter of principle, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures.

While recognizing the decision by the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, we cannot accept that unilaterally imposed measures impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba. To address this problem, the European Union Council of Ministers adopted, in November 1996, a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in Europe against the consequences of these Acts. Furthermore, at the May 1998 European Union-United States Summit held in London, a package was agreed that also sought to alleviate the problems with extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind, and an understanding regarding disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union reiterates its call on the United States to implement this agreement.

The European Union's policy towards Cuba was set out in a common position in 1996. Reaffirming the validity of this common position, the European Union, in June 2008, lifted the restricted measures imposed on Cuba in 2003. The dialogue with the authorities in Havana was resumed without preconditions and on the basis of reciprocity and non-discrimination. Full political dialogue ministerial sessions have been held with the Cuban Government to address issues of common interest, including human rights, a question at the core of relations with all third countries, including Cuba.

The European Union reaffirms its determination to pursue a results-oriented comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities as well as with representatives of civil society and peaceful pro-democracy opposition, in accordance with EU policies. The European Union reiterates the right of Cuban citizens to make decisions independently about their future.

The European Union is encouraged by the ongoing release of 52 political prisoners from the group imprisoned in 2003, and reiterates its call to the Cuban Government to unconditionally release all political prisoners. The European Union also reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to fully grant its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, including the freedom of expression and free access to information, to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and, following the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, to extend invitations to other rapporteurs to visit Cuba.

The existing restrictions on rights and freedoms undermine and offset Cuban achievements in health care and education. Similarly, domestic Cuban economic policy seriously hampers its own economic development. In this context, the European Union looks forward to the implementation of the economic reforms announced by the Cuban Government, and expresses its hope that these reforms will be extended and implemented in a manner that will address the key concerns of the Cuban population.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to the economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people. The European Union therefore believes that the lifting of the United States embargo would open up the Cuban economy to the benefit of the Cuban people.

We again express our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba that are contrary to commonly accepted rules of international trade. The European Union urges the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all the areas I have mentioned. In spite of continued concerns and criticisms about the human rights situation in Cuba, the European Union unanimously voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As in previous years, Uruguay voted in favour of the draft resolution presented by the delegation of Cuba (A/65/L.3), adopted as resolution 65/6, since we consider that the embargo against that country is counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that it contravenes the rules of international law, in particular norms that regulate international trade and those that are binding on the members of the World Trade Organization.

The position of Uruguay is in keeping with the broader context of defending multilateralism, non-intervention and the peaceful solution of disputes, which are the fundamental principles of our diplomacy. The Eastern Republic of Uruguay has expressed on numerous occasions, and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate, that we are against the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been maintained against Cuba, which has affected the well-being of the Cuban people.

As a matter of principle, Uruguay rejects and does not recognize in its national legislation the extraterritorial application of the domestic legislation of other States. In this regard, we condemn the application of unilateral coercive measures by the United States against Cuba. These measures constitute a form of pressure that is an obstacle to dialogue.

In voting in favour of this resolution, Uruguay would like to reiterate its commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument to resolve disputes between States and as an effective mechanism in promoting international cooperation, human rights, security and mutual understanding between peoples.

Mr. Solón (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The blockade against Cuba has failed. Almost 50 years after the imposition of that inhuman siege, far from having isolated the small island and its heroic people, the blockade has in fact triggered the broadest possible show of international solidarity. The clearest example of that solidarity was the General Assembly's adoption, for the nineteenth time, of a resolution on this subject.

One hundred and eighty-seven countries — that is, 97.39 per cent of the Member States of the Organization — have rejected the blockade imposed by the forces of imperialism against a nation that had the courage to speak with its own sovereign voice. The resolution that has been adopted today (resolution 65/6) is a recognition of the dignity, resolve and resistance of a nation, that, in the face of adversity, has not fallen to its knees.

The United States, which claims to be the defender of liberty, violates that very fundamental principle itself through this blockade. The only thing

that this blockade does is violate the human rights of the people of Cuba and generate economic losses that have already exceeded $750 billion.

It is unacceptable to defend the extraterritorial application of a legal standard sanctioned by a State in order to govern another without the approval of that State, as is the case with the well-known Helms-Burton Act. The United States Congress cannot regulate the political life of another sovereign State. That is in absolute contravention of every founding principle of the United Nations.

In the debate preceding the adoption of the resolution, we were struck by the fact that the representative of the United States said that the blockade will end when the Cuban people enjoy the freedoms that the Government of the United States deems appropriate according to its own vision. This is a confession by the Government of the United States that it is using the blockade to impose its hegemonic vision on the Cuban people. No country has the right to impose its own vision or principles on another country. We all have an obligation to respect the sovereignty of all the Member States of the United Nations.

Cuba's response in the face of the imperialist blockade is an example for all humankind. Cuba has reacted by showing solidarity to every country of the world that has requested it. Its doctors and teachers have helped to save thousands from illiteracy, darkness and death in every region of the world. The most recent example of that solidarity is the widescale support it provided to the kindred Republic of Haiti.

The greatest success of the blockade against Cuba has been to isolate the United States, as we note here today in the General Assembly. The arrogance and the imposition of sanctions by a reactionary and imperialist minority in the United States will never defeat the countries of the world that have taken Cuba into their hearts.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): As in previous years, Angola voted in favour of resolution 65/6, which was presented to the Assembly by Minister for Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla of Cuba, whose presence in the Assembly today we welcome.

In his statement, he very vividly and clearly described to us the dramatic impact of the sanctions on the Cuban population. The result of the vote is very eloquent. I am pleased to say that Angola joins the international community once again in condemning the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We appeal for its end. The embargo, which has lasted for half a century, is a flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people.

For consecutive years, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly adopted resolutions urging all countries, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, to retract all laws and measures with extraterritorial effects that compromise the sovereignty of other States, undermine the legitimate rights and interests of entities and persons under the jurisdiction of those States and affect their freedom of trade and navigation. Regrettably, however, the long-term economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba is still in place, in violation of those resolutions and in blatant violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law. The General Assembly has today adopted a resolution — a result that is really very clear.

The changes adopted by the United States Administration in relation to a few aspects of the embargo have neither been relevant nor sufficient to lessen the scope of the economic and social problems resulting from the embargo. There is a need to continue to move towards the lifting of the embargo. We encourage the United States Government to pursue this in a positive direction. We look forward to the day when the General Assembly will no longer need to include this item on its agenda.

By adhering to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and by fulfilling all the pertinent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, we reaffirm our commitment to the norms of international law by supporting the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic persuasion.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform members that, at 10 a.m. in this Hall on Friday, 29 October, the General Assembly will consider draft resolution A/65/L.7, entitled "Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture", jointly under agenda item 13, entitled, "Integrated and

coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", and agenda item 115, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". I wish to remind members that, as scheduled, we will hold the joint debate on those items on Tuesday, 23 November.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.37

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

37th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 26 October 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.3)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that, at the 36th plenary meeting, the Assembly adopted draft resolution A/65/L.3 as resolution 65/6. We will now continue with the list of speakers in explanation of the vote.

Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote, I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Minn (Myanmar): Given the similar impacts felt because of its own social and political system and its own path of development, Myanmar fully sympathizes with the Cuban people and understands the extent of the hardship and suffering caused by the embargo against them, in particular the elderly, women and children. The will of the international community has been clearly expressed every year with the adoption by an overwhelming majority of States of resolutions calling for an end to the embargo. My delegation believes that it is the legitimate right of each nation to choose its own social and political systems and its own path of development. The embargo against Cuba is contrary not only to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, but also to international law. For those reasons, Myanmar voted in favour, as it has in previous years, of the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname): I thank you, Sir, for allowing me to speak in explanation of vote under agenda item 41, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Suriname has always been against this embargo and has therefore fully supported and voted in favour of successive General Assembly resolutions regarding this matter. Suriname would like to reiterate once again its position on this crucial issue.

The Government of the Republic of Suriname remains committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to upholding the principles of international law. In this regard, the unilateral enforcement of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Likewise, the continuation for another year of the trade embargo against Cuba, which will remain in force

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until 14 September 2011, remains cause for great concern against the background of the deepening impact of the current global economic and financial crisis, which will further aggravate the hardships of the people of Cuba.

Suriname therefore reiterates its call for an end to the embargo, which is contrary to international law and negatively affects regional cooperation in the Caribbean region.

Finally, my delegation would also like to align itself with the statements delivered this morning by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Permanent Representative of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Today, the delegation of Belarus, along with 186 other States Members of the United Nations, voted in support of resolution 65/6, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The Republic of Belarus has consistently condemned the use of unilateral economic measures as a means of exerting political and economic pressure on developing countries. It believes that they run counter to the fundamental principles of international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other international legal instruments.

We affirm the inalienable right of every State to decide on its own model of development and believe that any unilateral attempt by an individual State to change the internal political system of another State by use of military, political, economic or other pressure is inadmissible.

Barely a month ago, the leaders of the Member States discussed in this very Hall the measures that needed to be taken by the international community in order to fulfil their obligations under the Millennium Development Goals and to guarantee a decent standard of living for the citizens of their countries. We are convinced that the application of coercive economic measures is the type of instrument that creates serious obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, impairs the vital interests of the people of a country subjected to sanctions, and violates the rights of its peoples to a dignified existence, thus contributing to the emergence of political instability and the outbreak of conflicts.

We consider that, in the current conditions and as a result of the continued consequences of the world financial and economic crisis, the use of unilateral sanctions and coercive measures is especially inappropriate. This is not the first time that we have heard appeals from the rostrum of the General Assembly for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Today, we have adopted the nineteenth successive General Assembly resolution on this question. We express the hope that our collective voice will be heard this time.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Saint Kitts and Nevis would like to add its voice in support of agenda item 41 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to give its reasons for voting in favour of resolution 65/6. This is an extremely important debate that speaks to the very core of international law, sovereignty, non-intervention and the strengthened role of the United Nations in international affairs.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has very good relations with the United States of America. That country remains one of our closest and strongest partners. We respect the role that the United States of America has played in international relations and in the establishment and promotion of this body. The United States of America is a global leader and we acknowledge and remain grateful for its role in international affairs.

However, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the representative of Republic of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, in its contribution to the Secretary-General's report (A/65/83) on this matter, advised that we do not support or apply any laws or measures that affect the free flow of international trade. We also advised that we do not apply laws with extraterritorial effect that impinge on the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction.

This is a principled position that extends to all States members of this body. Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore feels very strongly about bringing to a close the embargo imposed on Cuba. Cuba is one of the

closest allies of Saint Kitts and Nevis. That country is a pan Caribbean partner and has aided in the development of the health-care system and other areas in Saint Kitts and Nevis. There is much that the international community has benefited and can benefit from in cooperating with Cuba, just as Saint Kitts and Nevis has benefited.

We see this embargo as a burden on our brothers and sisters in Cuba. The negative impact on the economy of that small island developing State is quite profound and unfair to the people of Cuba. The international community remains in the grip of a global recession, and while many of us rely on a partnership with other countries to recover, Cuba remains stunned by the embargo. This goes against the very principles of partnership for which this United Nations stands.

The fact that the majority of Member States traditionally vote in favour of the draft resolution signifies that the overriding sentiment is that the embargo is wrong. We implore all Member States to respect the sanctity of the General Assembly and the decisions it makes. Failure to do so undermines the functioning of the United Nations system.

It is my delegation's hope that the two countries — Cuba and the United States of America — can improve their relationships and embark upon a process of partnership and cooperation. There is much that we can learn from each other, but the embargo remains an impediment to that process. That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis supports resolution 65/6 and voted in favour of it. We reiterate our call on both countries to find common ground so that the entire international community can move on from this impasse.

Mr. Luangmuninthone (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The Lao People's Democratic Republic associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its opposition to the continued unilateral imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo upon the Republic of Cuba by the Government of the United States of America. The embargo imposed on Cuba not only runs counter to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, but also violates the fundamental principle of the sovereignty, equality and right to development of the peoples of all nations. Furthermore, it continues to cause untold suffering and hardship to the Cuban people and to hinder Cuba's socio-economic progress and development.

The adoption of the relevant resolution for the nineteenth consecutive year, with the overwhelming support of the General Assembly, indicates the international community's rejection of unilateral coercive economic measures in general and the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in particular. The resolution we have just adopted once again confirms the friendship and solidarity of the international community with the Cuban people and the call for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the embargo against Cuba.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic believes in the importance of resolving the difference between countries through peaceful dialogue and negotiation on the basis of equality and mutual respect for sovereignty. In this spirit, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its continued support for the resolution of the General Assembly under this agenda item and voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Mr. Sefue (United Republic of Tanzania): The General Assembly has adopted successive resolutions calling upon States to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and norms of international law, and urging them to refrain from enacting laws and taking measures that are damaging to the legitimate rights and interests of other States. Regrettably, however, this just appeal by the international community has not always been heeded, and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly remain unimplemented.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba has created huge difficulties for the Cuban people in their efforts to achieve economic and social development and carry out reform. It has seriously undermined the efforts of the Cuban Government to eliminate poverty and improve the living standards of its people, and it has inflicted enormous suffering on Cuban women and children.

The embargo has also impeded the normal useful economic and trade exchanges between Cuba and other countries, and gravely encroached upon their legitimate rights and interests. In several areas, the embargo

frustrates efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Today, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania once again voted in favour of the resolution to end this embargo. This vote also expresses our solidarity with like-minded members in opposing the application of unilateral trade measures against Cuba, with extraterritorial effects on the peoples and economies of other States. Tanzania perceives these unilateral measures as being contrary to the spirit of multilateralism and against the Charter of the United Nations.

Tanzania enjoys healthy and sound relations with the people and Government of Cuba and cooperates with that country in various socio economic endeavours, including capacity-building in health, education and sports. Tanzania believes that cooperation between the two countries would flourish further if the unilaterally imposed blockade were lifted.

Tanzania enjoys excellent relations and a robust development partnership with the United States of America, and it is in that spirit that my Government once again joins other Member States in urging the United States to listen to repeated and increasing calls by the international community to finally bring an end to the embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbour country.

Mr. Abubaker (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The imposition of sanctions and embargoes has never been an appropriate solution to disputes between States. Such coercive measures send an unequivocal message to the world that the language of force and hegemony governs relations between States. It also reflects the authoritarianism and arrogance that hamper progress towards comprehensive peace and friendly relations among States through the settlement of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means.

The Charter of the United Nations stipulates the principle of the pacific settlement of disputes through negotiation, conciliation, fact-finding, agreement or recourse to international arbitration on the basis of the sovereign equality of States and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and full respect for the sovereignty of States irrespective of their size, population or political and economic system. In this regard, my delegation calls on all members of the international community to comply with those principles.

Having been subject to an economic blockade in the past decade, my country is very well aware of the nefarious consequences of such coercive measures on people, their health, education, development, and the full enjoyment of their human rights. My country therefore resolutely opposes unilateral measures imposed by States for political ends, and expresses its grave concern at the persistence of certain States in applying coercive, economic, unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions that clearly run counter to the principles of international law, in particular those of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. There is no doubt that the application of such sanctions only aggravates human suffering, exacerbates disputes and fosters hatred among peoples. We call on the United States to lift the blockade against Cuba and to promote good relations in the interests of both peoples.

My delegation voted in favour of resolution 65/6, calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, because we feel that the imposition of sanctions and embargoes are not the best means of settling disputes between States. I hope that the resolution will contribute to the peaceful settlement of the dispute between these two countries without resort to unilateral coercive economic measures.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations provide for the right of countries to exercise their sovereignty within their own territories and to enjoy non-interference by others in their internal affairs. Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has adopted resolutions and decisions that emphasize the sacrosanct nature of these purposes and principles. All States Members should therefore respect the Charter, which represents the constitution of the Organization and its pre eminent frame of reference.

Because the unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and new measures aimed at reinforcing that embargo contravene the principles and rules of international law and international humanitarian law — as well as rules governing relations among countries, especially the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-interference in their internal affairs, and the freedom of

international navigation and trade — the embargo is definitely illegal and runs counter to the norms of relations among States.

It also represents a challenge, unprecedented in international law, to the credibility of the legality of United States policies themselves. The embargo, which has been imposed on Cuba for over 50 years, has created a unilateral legal precedent contrary to international law, which we reject. It has exposed Cuba to harmful economic, social and political effects and deepened the suffering of the Cuban people, especially children and the elderly.

The embargo puts the United States of America in direct and unenviable opposition to the international community. It has hindered the tireless efforts of the Cuban people to achieve prosperity and progress and continues to harm the Cuban economy. Losses have exceeded tens of billions of dollars, not including indirect losses estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars. The embargo also harms the social and cultural development of the Cuban people and deprives them of the opportunities and benefits resulting from free trade. It directly violates the basic freedoms and human rights of the Cuban people, including the right to life and development.

The General Assembly has discussed this agenda item for over 19 consecutive years and has adopted numerous resolutions in that regard by overwhelming majorities. However, regrettably, the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba is still in effect.

The support of 187 Member States for the resolution only emphasizes the near unanimous determination of the international community to put an end to the totally illegal embargo against Cuba. Resort to unjustified coercive economic measures against other countries, regardless of their political orientation, is unacceptable to the international community, which has repeatedly rejected the unilateral embargo against Cuba, now expanded under the national laws of the United States, including the domestic legislation known as the Helms-Burton Act. That law has extraterritorial effect, prejudicing the sovereignty of other nations in their dealings with Cuba in contravention of the principle of equal sovereignty of States and the principles of international law.

Given its mandate, the General Assembly is called on to take the measures necessary to put an end to the unilateral embargo, economic sanctions and other aggressive extraterritorial policies of the United States — all in contravention of international law — against its direct neighbours and other countries that are geographically distant from the United States.

In this respect, my delegation hopes that all embargoes imposed by the United States against Cuba and many other Member States — including my country, Syria — will be ended. We also hope that the voice of the international community, as expressed through the General Assembly today, will be met with respect by the United States and that it will come to enjoy the full support of that country's legislative bodies.

It is quite significant and worth noting that Israel voted against resolution 65/6, in opposition to the vast majority of the international community. Israel's vote clearly highlights the validity of the international community's negative view and assessment of that country. Again, Israel has acted contrary to international law. It represents an isolated minority of the international community. Israel's vote has made matters worse for the United States, whose Administration has been seeking to return to the logic of dialogue between countries in conflict.

It is high time that the rules of international law were respected and that different points of view allowed to prevail. Israel's vote for the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba clearly shows the world that it is taking direct advantage of that embargo in a desperate attempt to justify its own embargo against Gaza, which has also been internationally rejected. Israel's desperate embargo against Gaza, I repeat, is not tolerated by the international community. As a result Israel feels compelled to support another equally illegal embargo — that imposed, contrary to international law, by the United States against Cuba. Is there any position that could hurt the American position more than the vote of Israel?

Ms. Alsharif (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 65/6, which was introduced by Cuba in the presence of its Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom we welcome and congratulate on the overwhelming international support it enjoys. We confirm in this respect the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrine equal sovereignty among States, non-interference in their domestic affairs, and

freedom of navigation and trade, which are also guaranteed in a number of international legal instruments.

We express grave concern regarding the ongoing enactment, application and enforcement by certain States of unilateral laws and extraterritorial measures affecting the sovereignty and interests of other States, resulting in negative repercussions that extend beyond national borders, contravene the principles of international legitimacy, and hinder the freedom of international trade. We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The General Assembly is considering agenda item 41 for the nineteenth consecutive year in the context of the increasing awareness of and broad rejection by Member States of the taking of unilateral, coercive and extraterritorial economic measures. This was clearly expressed in today's voting results. Ongoing support for the relevant resolution year after year is a clear expression of the wide-scale rejection of the unilateral embargo imposed on Cuba and its identification as a means of political and economic coercion. The embargo is a clear and flagrant violation of the international architecture and fundamental principles on which the United Nations Charter is based, in addition to international law and the norms that govern commercial, economic and financial relations among countries.

At the Second South Summit held in Doha in June 2005, the imposition of laws and legislation of extraterritorial effect was rejected and all other coercive economic measures, including sanctions imposed unilaterally on developing countries, were condemned. At their fifteenth summit, held in Sharm el Sheikh in July 2009, NAM heads of State and Government stressed their steadfast position on the necessity of ending the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. At the 33rd meeting of the foreign ministers of the Group of 77 and China, held in September 2009, the representatives of the Group rejected the imposition of transnational laws and systems and condemned all forms of coercive economic measures, including sanctions imposed unilaterally on developing countries. In addition, the final statement of the ministers for foreign affairs once again expressed the urgent need to put an end to these measures immediately.

The Government of the Sudan follows a policy based on full respect for international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, sovereign equality among countries, and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. In accordance with the Sudan's position based on the aforementioned principles, my delegation condemns the imposition of economic and political sanctions on developing countries because they constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and have a destructive impact on the efforts of those countries to achieve sustainable development.

In this respect, we confirm the Sudan's commitment to resolution 65/6 because the Government of National Unity does not enact or enforce laws or take any measures whose application beyond national borders could affect the sovereignty of other States. Hence, the Government of the Sudan calls for the abolition of laws that impose such measures.

My delegation is opposed to unilateral sanctions that are tied to political demands, such as those imposed by the United States on my country since November 1997. Such sanctions are a violation of the legitimate right of the Sudanese Government and people to choose their own political, economic and social systems. They damage the living standards of the Sudanese people and obstruct the Government's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, eliminate poverty, and expand access to education, health care and the technologies necessary to enhancing agricultural and human development. Such unilateral economic sanctions have affected all regions of the Sudan. They have also exacerbated the humanitarian situation and development in Darfur.

Notwithstanding the economic and trade embargo imposed on my country, the Sudan is still strengthening its bilateral, economic and political relations with developing countries, countries of the South and developed countries, and this has enhanced its economic and social development.

Bilateral relations between the Sudan and Cuba were strengthened following the joint ministerial meeting between the two countries held in Havana in June 2007 to promote cooperation in all fields. The assignment of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations as

Ambassador to Cuba in December 2007 was a step forward in the promotion of our relations. In addition, the Sudan took part in the ministerial meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau in April 2009, which endorsed the necessity to end the economic embargo imposed on Cuba.

My delegation calls for the establishment of a better life for every individual and a better world for all, in which countries large and small coexist peacefully. Such peaceful coexistence requires the commitment of all countries to the main principles of the United Nations Charter and to managing their relations in an appropriate manner.

In this respect, we urge States that have applied laws or taken unilateral measures that affect the sovereignty of other States to take the necessary action to abolish and annul them in order to preserve the right of other States to live in sovereignty, respect the principles of the United Nations Charter and undertake mutual cooperation for the sake of peace, development and the welfare of all peoples of the world.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): Viet Nam, as in all previous years, voted in favour of the resolution under agenda item 41, introduced at today's General Assembly meeting by the Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

Nineteen years have passed since the General Assembly adopted the first resolution demanding an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. Throughout these 19 past years, the General Assembly has annually adopted a resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, with increasingly consensual support. This year, as last year, the resolution has enjoyed record support in its 19 year history, with 187 out of 192 Member States voting in its favour.

As a grave violation of international law, including international laws relating to the freedom of trade and navigation, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, this embargo runs counter to universally recognized norms governing relations between sovereign countries, regardless of their political systems and their choices of their paths of development, as well as to the fundamental principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As such, this embargo, which has endured for half a century, has caused phenomenal financial and material losses to the Cuban economy. It has, at the same time, represented a major obstacle to Cuba's social development, affecting the Cuban people's efforts to maintain a normal life in respect and dignity, let alone an improved life as humankind moves towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It has also impacted all those who have wished and worked to foster legitimate, normal and mutually beneficial cultural, economic, commercial and financial relations with Cuba, including an increasing proportion of the American people.

By voting in favour of resolution 65/6, my delegation reiterates Viet Nam's unswerving position that disputes among States should and can only be resolved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations, on the basis of equality, mutual respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, and the principle of the non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We again joined the overwhelming majority of Member States in requesting that the Government of the United States of America bring an immediate end to its unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in order to lessen the hardships unduly inflicted upon the Cuban people, reduce tension and create an atmosphere conducive to constructive efforts towards the early normalization of relations between the two countries in the interests of peace, stability and development of the region and of the world as a whole.

The Government and people of Viet Nam once again reaffirm their support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba. Together with the international community, we stand ready to continue to assist Cuba, as we always have done, to overcome the consequences of the embargo.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I want to thank him for the detailed briefing he delivered on the impact of the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Nigeria believes that it is the right of the Cuban people to independently decide on how they manage their future. Consequently, as in all previous years, Nigeria voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Nigeria, like the overwhelming majority of the international community, opposes the imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. We consider the extraterritorial application of unilateral measures as contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. It also runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade — principles that we hold dear and that this body has championed over the years.

In this regard, we welcome the decision taken last year by the United States to remove a number of restrictions on travel to Cuba and on the transfer of money and postal orders to Cuba from the United States.

Nigeria reiterates that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations remain the only acceptable means of advancing long-term peace and stability. We appeal to the international community to prevail upon both countries to move towards constructive and productive engagement geared towards reaching a definitive resolution of their differences, leading to the lifting of the longest lasting trade embargo in human history.

The Federal Government of Nigeria maintains friendly relations with all States and does not favour unilateral punitive measures to settle political disputes. Consequently, Nigeria reiterates its position in favour of resolution 65/6. We have thus voted in favour of the lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines):

> "The world must stand together to demonstrate that international law is not an empty promise" (*A/64/PV.3, p. 11*).
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> "No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. ... The traditional divisions between nations of the South and North make no sense in an interconnected world, nor do alignments of nations rooted in the cleavages of a long-gone Cold War.
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> "The time has come to realize that the old habits and ... arguments are irrelevant to the challenges faced by our peoples." (*ibid., p. 10*)

The words that I have just read were not penned by my delegation; they were quoted from the speech delivered by our esteemed friend and brother, President Barack Obama of the United States, in his inaugural address to the General Assembly one year ago. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wholeheartedly aligns itself with those words, as we do with the statements made today on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

President Obama's words are particularly significant in the context of the ongoing United States embargo against Cuba, now well into its fifth decade. If we are to establish international law as more than an empty promise, then the embargo, which violates international law and norms, must end. If we are to abandon the cleavages of a long gone Cold War, then this relic of that ideological conflict must similarly be abandoned. And if we agree than one nation must not be elevated over another, then surely, no super-Power should subject a small island to decades of punitive persecution.

For the past 18 years, the Members of the United Nations have spoken out, in increasingly overwhelming numbers, against the embargo. Most of the friends of the United States — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines counts itself firmly among its closest allies — have repeatedly decried the rationale, impact, utility and legality of the embargo. Indeed, there may be no clearer and more long-standing example of the United States disregard of overwhelming international opinion than its continued unilateral imposition of this senseless blockade.

A report issued last year by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) concludes that "the President has discretion to further ease regulatory restrictions" on a series of important incremental measures that are currently causing suffering among Cubans. It is most unfortunate that any foreign president exerts such a direct and negative influence on the day-to-day lives of another nation's citizens. These regulatory restrictions cannot continue to act as a noose to be selectively tightened and loosened at the whim of any one country, or the discretion of any one president, in flagrant disregard of international law and norms.

The GAO report goes on to state that the embargo cannot be fully eliminated without the repeal of certain

legislation by the United States Congress or "without determining that a transition government or a democratically elected government is in power in Cuba". However, just last year, the United States President stood before us and gave voice to a widely held belief when he said that,

> "Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions. And I admit that America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy." (*ibid., p. 14*)

In this year's address to the United Nations, President Obama again disavowed any idea of unilaterally forcing another independent nation to follow a prescribed and preconceived political path, when he said, "make no mistake: the ultimate success of democracy in the world will not come because the United States dictates it" (see *A/65/PV.11*). Cathartic and laudable as such statements may be, they ring hollow when viewed through the prism of existing and stringently applied legislation that unabashedly attempts to externally impose a cookie-cutter concept of democracy, totally divorced from the culture, history and context of the Cuban people.

Over the years, the embargo has been a policy in search of a justification. At one point, it was to contain the so called security threat posed by Cuba. At another, it was to thwart the perceived ideological menace of Communism in our hemisphere. Then, it was in retaliation for expropriated property, after that, to establish a particular type of democracy. Today, we hear of human rights. Many other rationalizations have been similarly advanced and discarded over the years. But, amid shifting justifications, the embargo has remained in force, with its only accomplishments being the decades of hardships it has visited upon the Cuban people and the narrow political gains it may engender within certain domestic constituencies.

In this period of economic and food crises, the impact of the embargo seems particularly cruel. Access to medical hardware, as we heard earlier, modern medication, basic foodstuffs, construction materials, heavy equipment and spare parts are all severely restricted by the embargo. Recent token measures in the areas of individual travel and remittances by Cuban families living overseas have not affected those major impediments to Cuba's development and advancement.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines finds itself in an era in which our small population and economy — not to mention the waning military significance of the Caribbean region — have allowed our needs and concerns to be overlooked by those who see the world only through the prism of their narrow and immediate interests. However, Cuba has remained a staunch and abiding partner in the development of our country. Cuban universities have graduated over 250 Vincentian students and are currently playing host to 150 more. Cuban's surgeons have performed operations on over 3,000 Vincentian patients. Cuban doctors have brought quality medical care and expertise to the most remote areas of our country. Even as we speak, Cuban engineers, architects and workers are labouring alongside Vincentians in the construction of a modern hospital and an international airport.

As far wealthier nations and institutions have looked askance at our developmental struggles and offered only dubious prescriptions and platitudes, the Cuban people have rolled up their sleeves and given freely of themselves in a manner that has touched the hearts and souls of the Vincentian people. No dollar amount can adequately reflect the value of that support, solidarity and partnership, for which the Cubans have asked nothing in return. Our appreciation cannot be overstated.

My delegation would like to conclude as it began, with the stirring and inspiring words of United States President Barack Obama's inaugural address to the General Assembly last year.

> "The choice is ours. We can be remembered as the generation that chose to drag the arguments of the twentieth century into the twenty-first, and that put off hard choices, refused to look ahead and failed to keep pace because we defined ourselves by what we were against instead of what we were for, or we can be a generation that chooses to see the shoreline beyond the rough waters ahead, that comes together to serve the common interests of human beings, and finally gives meaning to the promise imbedded in the name given to this institution — the United Nations. (*A/64/PV.3, p. 11*)

Let us put the twentieth century arguments behind us. Let us forever forswear illegal unilateral

action. Let us instead look to the future, keep pace with the times and heed the insistent and consistent voice of the international community. This resolution is not simply some ritualistic annual rite of the United Nations; it is a matter of life and death for 11.5 million Cubans.

We in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believe in change, and we live in hope that there will no longer be any need for us to gather next year to vote on this resolution yet again.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption, during this morning's plenary meeting, of resolution 65/6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We would like to reiterate our position in that regard.

As it did last year, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again voted in favour of this resolution as an expression of our full support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba in their struggle for justice and social progress, as well as in adherence to our consistent position of opposing all forms of interference and threats or uses of force and sanctions against sovereign States.

The consecutive adoption of this resolution by the General Assembly for the past 18 years, including various outcome documents of major international and regional meetings, including the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, manifest vividly that the United States sanctions and embargo against Cuba constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. It is deplorable, however, that the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba remains intact after 50 years, despite the strong demand and expectations of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations.

No sign of any change in the policy of the United States Administration on the embargo against Cuba has been seen for the past year since the adoption of resolution 64/6. On the contrary, the United States Administration approved $40 million for the fiscal years 2009 and 2010, with the aim of encouraging subversive programmes against Cuba. If such an amount of money were allocated and used for supporting the socio-economic development of developing countries rather than for the subversion of sovereign States, one could easily imagine the positive effect that would result.

The unilateral and cruel embargo by the United States against Cuba has already caused hundreds of billions of dollars in losses in various areas of the country's economy. It has also severely impacted the social life and well-being of the Cuban people, thus creating a great obstacle to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in that country.

The United States embargo against Cuba shows that the routinely uttered commitment by the United States to the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences is merely lip service and that its deeds in reality impede the efforts of other countries for socio-economic development, thereby hampering United Nations-wide efforts for the well-being and advancement of all human beings.

It is not only Cuba but also several other countries that suffered economic losses during the past year because of the United States unilateral and extraterritorial embargo. This absurd embargo — whereby one country unilaterally applies its own measures to the economic and trade sectors of other countries beyond its own territorial scope — deserves denunciation and rejection.

By restricting the constitutional rights of its citizens who wish to travel to Cuba, the United States Government also contravenes its own Constitution.

In general, the United States policy of embargo against Cuba mocks the entire international community, which demands an end to the embargo. It also constitutes a grave violation of the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and relevant international law. Any coercive measure with a unilateral and extraterritorial nature that pursues sinister political purposes and imposes a political, economic and social system based on a certain country's own perspective should never be tolerated in any way.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the view that the United States embargo against Cuba is an illegitimate and inhuman act that can never be justified in terms of political,

legal, moral or humanitarian aspects and constitutes a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the rights of an entire people. It is also undemocratic, as it aims to overthrow a sovereign State. We therefore strongly denounce the persistent United States embargo against Cuba.

Our delegation avails itself of this opportunity to strongly urge the United States to heed the demand of the international community, observe all relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted so far regarding the embargo against Cuba and take measures to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo against that country immediately and without any conditions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will in the future constantly support the just struggle of the Cuban Government and people to terminate the United States sanctions and embargo, and continue to further develop economic and trade relations with Cuba.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

A representative has requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members of the General Assembly that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of the delegation of Cuba.

Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am very grateful for the words of the 13 speakers who have spoken at this afternoon's unexpected meeting.

With respect to what has been said by the representatives of the United States and the European Union, this is the nineteenth occasion on which the delegation of the United States has repeated the same thing. The blockade is an act of economic warfare and an act of genocide. Last year I read out articles from the relevant conventions. Has the United States Department of State not done its homework or studied this issue? I will read it again. I have before me the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which in article 2 states that

> "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts ... : ... Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; [or] Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

I already read here this morning the famous memorandum by Mr. Mallory. These are not ideological arguments from the past. The embargo is an old vestige held over from the Cold War. It is not an issue of rhetoric, but rather one of aggression against the Cuban people. The aim of the United States is not to help or support our people. We know that the embargo causes hardship and suffering. It does not cause deaths because the Cuban revolution prevents them. How can the United States delegation explain the punishment of Cuban children as described here? If it wanted to help or support the Cuban people, the only thing it would have to do is to lift the embargo. Why are Americans prevented from visiting our country and receiving information first-hand? Why are they restricting so called people-to-people contacts?

The pretext for the embargo has continued to change. First, it was the supposed membership in the Sino-Soviet axis; then it was the so-called exporting of revolution to Latin America, followed by the presence of Cuban troops in Africa, which were there to help defeat apartheid and preserve the independence of Angola and achieve that of Namibia. And then it was manipulation of human rights; but the embargo is a brutal violation of the human rights of the Cuban people.

We are ready to discuss violations of human rights. We can begin with the concentration camp in Guantánamo, where torture is exercised and there is no right of habeas corpus, it is the realm of military commissions outside the rule of law. Could the United States delegation explain here what happened in the Abu Ghraib, Bagram and Nama camps? Has the present Government brought any charges against those responsible? Have any charges been brought against those in the European Governments who authorized the secret prisons in Europe and the secret flights of the Central Intelligence Agency with people who had been kidnapped? Could the representative of the European Union clarify that? We can also talk about Wikileaks. Could they tell us something about the atrocities referred to in the 75,000 documents on crimes in Afghanistan and the 400,000 documents on Iraq?

What can the United States delegation tell us about extrajudicial executions proclaimed by Bush in his famous 2003 State of the Union address, to the applause of Congress? What has the present Government done vis-à-vis those who are responsible? Perhaps the Joint Special Operations Command has been dissolved. Were the executive orders and authorizations reversed, or are they still in force? Is it true that the chief of that command, General McChrystal, was reporting directly to Vice President Cheney? We could also discuss the brutal violence and high technology that they call counter-insurgency.

Changes in Cuba are a matter for the Cuban people. We will change all that has to be changed for the benefit of the Cuban people, but we will not be asking for the opinion of the United States Government. We choose our destiny freely. That is why we had a revolution. Those changes will be sovereign changes, not gestures. We know that for the United States the only thing that will suffice will be to establish a pro-yanki Government in Cuba, but that will not happen.

If the United States Government wants to advance in telecommunications, then it should lift the measures of the embargo that make business in that area impossible, put a stop to the pillaging of Cuban funds in United States banks and eliminate the provisions of the embargo that severely restrict Cubans' access to the Internet. If they want cooperation among universities, they should lift restrictions on academic, student, scientific and cultural exchanges and allow universities to establish agreements among themselves. If they want cooperation on drug trafficking, counter-terrorism, trafficking in persons, natural disasters and postal services, then they should at least respond to the proposal we made over a year ago without any preconditions.

The Government of the United States has changed, but the funding of internal subversion in Cuba is still the same. A high-ranking official of the United States Agency for International Development yesterday confirmed to journalist Tracey Eaton that in the most recent period $15.6 million had been sent to "individuals on the ground in Cuba". That is how they refer to their mercenaries.

Hostile radio and television broadcasts also continue.

The five Cuban anti-terrorists continue to be unjustly imprisoned. Recently, Geraldo Hernández Nordelo was groundlessly placed in solitary confinement, where he is denied medical treatment. Admitted international terrorists such as Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles freely walk about Miami, where they are even politically active.

There are talks on immigration, but the hostile immigration policy continues with the Cuban Adjustment Act and the wet-foot dry-foot policy.

Once again, it is totally false that the United States and Cuba are economic partners. Agricultural sales violate all regulations and practices of international trade and freedom of navigation. Lies have been told in this Hall regarding alleged donations to Cuba from non-governmental organizations amounting to $237 million.

The blockade is abusively extraterritorial and affects everyone in this Hall. It is not a bilateral matter.

I have little to add to what has already been said about the European Union. We do not recognize any moral or political authority whatsoever on the part of that body to qualify it to make criticisms about human rights. It would do better to concern itself with its brutal anti-immigrant policy, the deportation of minorities, the violent repression of demonstrators and the growing social exclusion of its unemployed and low-income sectors. Shamelessly and disgracefully, the European Parliament devotes itself to awarding prizes to the paid agents of the United States Government in Cuba. Now it says that the so called common position has been left behind. We shall see. The facts will speak for themselves. But the European Union is dreaming if it believes that it will be able to normalize relations with Cuba while the so-called common position exists.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.